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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE LEGACY OF MOTHER GOOSE

A STUDY OF CERTAIN AUTHORS IN LE CABINET DES FEES

by



Vivien Elizabeth Bosley

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Legacy of Mother Goose, A Study of Certain Authors in Le Cabinet des fées," submitted by Vivien Elizabeth Bosley in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French Literature.

ABSTRACT

At the end of the seventeenth century, telling fairy tales at gatherings, writing them for one's friends and publishing them for the world at large became a very popular pastime. The vogue reached its apogee with Perrault whose Contes de ma mère l'Oye retain their great appeal to this day.

If the tales were popular before Perrault, his success gave impetus to would-be writers to perpetuate the genre throughout the eighteenth century. At the beginning of that century a powerful tributary from the Orient flowed into the mainstream of the form when Galland published his translations of Les Mille et une nuits. These gave readers an appetite for more stories in an exotic setting and in an oriental guise, so that tellers of fairy tales could imitate or copy or invent in two modes. Le Cabinet des fées, a collection of fairy tales published at the end of the century, is a useful kind of album of the variations on the themes; by its very existence it testifies to the popularity of the genre right up to the Revolution.

In the case of most of the authors these tales are the exuberant jesting of people who had other things to do or other forms in which to write. Some indication of these other aspects of their lives is given in order to situate the tales on the fringes of literary activity.

Gueullette, in a big way, and Moncrief, in a small way, tapped the ample resources of the Orient for their tales, and either invented

their own plots or lifted them wholesale from other sources--but passed them off as their own. Mlle de Lussan and Caylus, latching on to the moral lesson which their century thought was an intrinsic part of any short genre take a moral and hang a story on to it--which is the reverse, surely, of folk tales where any moral has to be drawn by the reader from a tale which has had a spontaneous creation. Hamilton and Duclos use the form in order to mock it, or to spin amusing private fantasies; Rousseau bends it into a whimsical conte philosophique. The only example of a straightforward retelling of a European folk tale is Mme Leprince de Beaumont's famous version of "La Belle et la Bête." This version is contrasted with that of Mme de Villeneuve, as it is this latter which is much more elaborate and which corresponds more nearly to the idea of an invented, art tale.

The stories offer a fascinating contrast to the dominating idea of rationalism in the eighteenth century, but yet parallel the extreme decoration of the other arts. The form no longer sufficed when the fashion changed; its insubstantiality caused its own collapse. The literary taste of Romanticism demanded either the authenticity of collectors like the Grimm brothers, or the exploration of the human imagination of a different order as exemplified by E.T.A. Hoffmann in Germany, or Cazotte and Nodier in France.

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps some justification is needed for dragging out of obscurity a collection of works which has remained there undisturbed, for the most part, for a very long time. The first few volumes of Le Cabinet des fées, however, which contain the stories of Perrault, Mme d'Aulnoy and their contemporaries of the end of the seventeenth century, have been frequently and often well studied. Perrault's Contes de ma mère l'oye have been an inexhaustible source of discussion for specialists in folklore and comparative literature, and Mary Storer's account of the other seventeenth century writers in the collection has provided a reliable basis for further study of them.¹ There has been far less enthusiasm manifest among scholars to trace the path of the conte de fées through the eighteenth century. The reasons for this are not hard to find. To begin with, most of the exponents of the genre do not belong to what one thinks of as the first rank of writers in the eighteenth century, so they are not immediately attractive for their intrinsic literary merit. Secondly, they are very much at variance with the mainstream of contemporary literary thought. It is only natural that when students wish to examine a period when radical changes were taking place in the form and content of literature, we turn first to the great writers who wrought the changes and whom we know to have exercised the most decisive influence upon the subsequent development of literature.



Thirdly, and closely linked with the previous point, is the fact that the mode of the fairy story constituted a fashion rather than a continuous literary tradition, and by the end of the century it had petered out altogether as an adult form of amusement. Its place was pre-empted by the fantastic story which came into vogue precisely when the fairy story was on the wane. By the end of the century Cazotte had introduced new elements into tales of fantasy which pre-saged the advent of romanticism. The most important of these elements was the introduction of the author who was himself a participant in fantastic action, and whose involvement depended upon a lurid merging of fact and fiction which we find, for example, in Nodier's Trilby.

One of the best moments to achieve this merging is the state between sleep and wakefulness which leads to a state of weird semi-consciousness where dreams are confused with reality to give a hazy quality to narrative dear to the burgeoning romantics. This confusion between dreaming and wakefulness is not made in the stories we are about to look at; although the keystone of the whole edifice of our fairy stories is Les Mille et une nuits with its necessary implication of nocturnal imagining, dreams in this tradition are often spoken of, and have a significant role in the stories, but are always kept distinct from the actual narration.

The distinction between fairy stories and fantastic stories is usefully summed up by Roger Caillois in his Anthologie du fantastique:

La féerie est un récit situé, dès le début, dans l'univers fictif des enchanteurs et des génies. Les premiers mots de la première phrase sont déjà un avertissement: En ce temps là ou Il y avait une fois....

La différence est éclatante dès qu'il s'agit de fantômes ou de vampires. Certes ce sont aussi des êtres d'imagination mais cette fois l'imagination ne les situe pas dans un monde lui-même imaginaire; elle se les représente ayant leurs entrées dans le monde réel, qui plus est, des entrées incompréhensibles, terribles, invariablement funestes.²

The stories we are going to look at are very much in the first category and are the kind of stories which we are accustomed to thinking of as children's fare. Even modern juvenile fiction seems to have developed more from the tradition of the fantastic, for if we think of classic modern children's stories from Alice in Wonderland to Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are, we recognize at once the phenomenon of the confusion between sleep and wakefulness, and the intermingling of the real with the imaginary.

For us, the tales of Perrault, like those of the Brothers Grimm, have become ossified in the manner of something rather sacred that must not be tampered with. For the writers of the eighteenth century, the irruption of these stories of humble origin, combined with those of most exotic provenance, was a revelation and, as we are about to see, stirred many an imagination to imitation, sometimes witty, sometimes slavish, sometimes satiric. This being the case, we get some inkling of why it may be rewarding to pause over Le Cabinet des fées for a while.³ Although read only by those with a particular interest in the period nowadays, it is representative of considerable literary activity, which was, therefore, important in its time.

We are accustomed to think of the eighteenth century as essentially the age of reason. Lumière and philosophe are the words most frequently encountered when we think of the century, and Georges May has pointed out that not only the philosophers, but the novelists

too were masters of rationalization when it came to justifying as moral treatises the most romanesque of their works.⁴ But this assessment is far from accounting for the century as a whole. Gossman's study of literature and society of the time makes it clear that only a tiny fraction of the population was involved in either the production or consumption of philosophically oriented literary output--or indeed of any other literary output.⁵ When we examine collections like Le Cabinet des fées we realize that even the cultural and intellectual élite were far from being totally absorbed by the current of rationalism. In certain cases, as in Rousseau's La Reine Fantastique, for example, we find at least a reference to the philosophic preoccupation of the period, and a certain mocking of them in a similar vein to that of Voltaire's in his Contes philosophiques, but these are exceptions--as, of course, Rousseau is exceptional, and for the most part the stories show no interest in the arguments that were exercising more famous authors. On the contrary, they constitute a very strong reaction against, or an escape from such concerns.

One can imagine why this might have been thought to be necessary. The philosophical works of the century are the result of hard thinking by individuals and by groups of serious people who were trying to come to grips with the reality of man's situation in the universe and of his relation with his fellow men. The intensity with which these people discussed, and the extent of personal investment in the principles they were defending must have created a fairly acrimonious atmosphere--as we know from the quarrels in which Voltaire was

constantly involved, and from the unpleasantness which arose between Diderot and Rousseau. The contes de fées, on the contrary, had an emollient effect on society. They provided wish-fulfilment in that punishment and reward were meted out as everyone would wish, so that the virtuous were satisfactorily elevated and the wicked even more satisfactorily brought low. Their very existence bespoke leisure and a certain frivolity and they carried this atmosphere with them, either when they were passed from friend to friend as gifts, or when they were read aloud in the salons. All this is not to say that the authors of these stories were necessarily idle sybarites; rather, it is significant that during the course of the eighteenth century the fairy story, which in the seventeenth had been almost exclusively the domain of female writers (with the honourable exception of Perrault and Fénelon, of course), was taken over more and more by writers. This would seem to indicate that they were no longer the almost spontaneous production of lively minds which had few other channels for their talents, but were very much more a conscious tribute to the values of leisure. The topoi of the stories of the two periods reflect this consciousness. The stories of the late seventeenth century have no specific setting, and Jacques Barchilon remarks thus on the way their authors create an impression of otherworldliness:

In the society of the last decade of the seventeenth century it is doubtful that lovers expressed themselves in the language of préciosité. Préciosité in the realm of social manners was by then a thing of the past. Perhaps these women authors used précieux language precisely because it belonged to a past considered less drab and more "romantic" than the present they knew. By convention, fairy tales always occur

in the past. It was only natural that these story tellers used to introduce in their fairy tales the language which they considered as capable of the most elevated expression of love such as they could have heard in the theatre of Corneille, Racine, Molière, and the operas of Quinault and Lully.⁶

Later authors turn away forcefully even from this kind of reality-once-removed. They use the technique of the magic carpet and transport their readers to exotic places, usually the distant orient, so that there is no possibility of any confusion with any kind of recognizable reality. Yet the men who invented these flights of fancy were by no means solely désœuvrés, frequenters of salons in search of diversion from boredom. Gueullette, for example, was a busy man who must have thought of his many fairy stories as welcome relief from his frantic tasks. He, and many of his contemporaries, had at their disposal another tool for escapism, namely the parade; this form of theatrical diversion was usually coarse, not to say positively obscene, and Le Cabinet des fées is concerned exclusively with decencies.

Le Cabinet des fées is then an interesting reminder of the dichotomy which existed in the eighteenth century in the minds of men and in their literature. On the one hand they show that there was an element of revolt against the overriding preoccupation with liberty, equality and fraternity, and on the other they represent a refusal to be absorbed into the literary current of realism of which Marivaux's famous dispute between Madame Dutour and the coachman was the most celebrated example.

Although the point of the preceding paragraphs has been to show how different the content of these fairy stories is from the prevailing

spirit of their time, the point of this will be to indicate, paradoxically, to what extent their authors were, nevertheless, men of that time, and therefore how even these stories illustrate how pervasive were certain elements of eighteenth-century culture. Mention has already been made of the magic carpet. Le Cabinet des fées contains Galland's translation of Les Mille et une nuits and that of Pétis de la Croix's of Les Mille et un jours. The first part of Galland's translation appeared in 1704 and gave a powerful fillip to the already keen interest in the Orient. The Lettres persanes of 1721 and Zadig of 1747 mark the high points of the tradition and give indication of its long span of favour. Fairy stories followed the current, and Gueullette and the comte de Caylus, for example, contribute various series of stories with an oriental setting to the collection. Their intent is somewhat different from that of Montesquieu and Voltaire; these latter were, of course, interested in making a comment on French society, and were using an exotic setting as a useful technique for achieving detachment from the local scene. In the context of the fairy story, the extreme strangeness of an Indian, Persian or Chinese setting makes the suspension of belief easier for the reader when genies, sorcerers and other supernatural characters appear. It also permits, in certain cases, a licentiousness which would be less easily explained away if it occurred in recognizable surroundings.

It was, nonetheless, the strongest movement of the eighteenth century--that of the growing consciousness of conditions of men who had hitherto been ignored--which, willy-nilly, put its imprint on fairy tales. When Perrault first published his Contes de ma mère

l'oye, he was, among other things, striking a blow in the cause of the Modernes in the famous Querelle; the consequences of the publication have had much farther-reaching influence than in that limited area. It is not at all clear where Perrault got the material for his stories, but most critics agree with Cosquin that it was something "que Perrault a recueilli de la bouche de quelque paysanne."⁷ Perrault was criticised from certain quarters for passing off as literature such uncouth tales. It can be argued that resistance to these homely themes would have been greater had it not been for the wind of egalitarianism which was blowing through the circles in which Perrault was read (without necessarily having any effect on their social practices, of course), and the democratizing ideas which were beginning to be expressed in more serious literature of the century might have had some effect on the acceptance of these stories from the lower echelons of society. It must be emphasized that it was only their origins and certain of their scenes which were humble. Thus the reader must encounter the scullery in "Cendrillon" or the pig sty in "Peau d'âne," but nevertheless breeding always wins through in the end.

Throughout Le Cabinet des fées we come across examples of such folk themes as lovers condemned to appear to the beloved in the guise of an animal, animals which speak and help the hero, and various kinds of enchantment which can be broken only by severe tests. That these inglenook motifs were accepted in the salons indicates a novel receptiveness to ideas formulated by the basses classes, even if sometimes the peasants are dressed as if for le Petit Trianon.

At least lip-service was also paid to the demands for rationalization. And the editor of Le Cabinet des fées praises Gueullette in these terms: "notre auteur nous montre le chemin de la vertu et de la félicité, lorsqu'il semble qu'il ne nous entretient que de bagatelles qui font le sujet d'un conte de Fées."⁸

Finally, Le Cabinet des fées offers us an incomparable starting point for studying the genre as such, from its apogee in France in the 1690's to its disappearance in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In his book The Fantastic Tzvetan Todorov claims: "...every literary study must participate in a double movement: from the particular work to literature generally (or genre), and from literature generally (from genre) to the particular work."⁹ In that case, a study of the whole collection will serve a useful purpose in illuminating certain aspects of the literary history of the eighteenth century, and a closer look at individual works will inform us in more detail as to the nature of the genre. In the "Discours préliminaire" of volume XXXVII of the collection,¹⁰ the editor summarizes in a useful way the history of interest in la féerie in France, starting with the Conte de la charrette of Chrétien de Troyes of which he says "Le succès du San Graal et du roman de Lancelot, la puissance merveilleuse de la dame du Lac répandirent dans tout le royaume et chez l'étranger le goût de la féerie." He also gives an insight, rare among French critics, into popular superstition.

Il y avoit auprès de Dompneuil en Lorraine d'où Jeanne étoit originaire, un arbre appelé l'Arbre des Dames sous lequel les fées alloient se promener. Les jeunes garçons et les jeunes fille du lieu, alloient danser et se promener au printemps, sous l'arbre enchanté. Le dimanche appelé des Fontaines étoit remarquable. Ce dimanche, l'église chante à

l'introît laetare jerusalem. Les jeunes gens de Dompneuill apportoint ce jour là du pain qu'ils mangeoient sous l'arbre. En revenant, ils passoient à la fontaine Ramuorum, des rameaux, et en buvoient de l'eau qui faisoit des merveilles. La Pucelle étoit quelquefois, de ces parties, et la voilà bien convaincue de magie. Cet exemple suffit pour prouver la crédulité des françois et l'existence des fées qu'on retrouve dans tous les romans de chevalerie. (C.F., XXXVII, 10)

Credulity of this kind manifests itself less often in French literature than in the literature of most European countries so a glance at this collection is of particular interest to students of folk literature. The editor then gives the reasons for the rise of the fairy story during the reign of Louis XIV. "La révocation de l'édit de Nantes avait glacé toutes les plumes, par la crainte de déplaire au roi.... On n'osoit plus rien écrire; et si Louis XIV n'eût aimé passionnément le théâtre peut-être Racine se serait-il borné à embrasser le genre satyrique, ou à écrire le panégyrique de son roi" (C.F., XXXVII, 26). The piety of Madame de Maintenon, however, and her concern for the education of the royal children encouraged authors to provide stories of a highly moral nature with a strongly didactic element. So from being a vehicle of education, the conte de fées developed into an amusement for the courtiers, and subsequently, as a reaction against the roman allégorique, the form enjoyed a renaissance in a more frivolous guise. "On dédaignoit les imitations anciennes de l'Italien, les romans historiques; on demandoit ce que les Espagnols exigent de leurs auteurs romanciers, un entretienemento, une narration de dix à douze feuilles. L'étendue des contes de fées, remplissoit ce nouveau plan" (C.F., XXXVII, 31). In this way were created the delightful stories of Mme d'Aulnoy and Mme de Murat. The editor then mourns the decline of the form: "Mais des écrivains très-médiocres s'en

mélèrent. Preschac, Lesconvel & tant d'autres, gâtèrent tout: les contes n'eurent plus que le titre de fées" (C.F., XXXVII, 37). And he ends: "Nous touchons au déclin du genre, dont madame le prince de Beaumont voulut retarder la chute. Elle s'appropriâ les contes qui entroient dans son plan d'éducation, tailla, rognâ, fit des livres qui sont devenus le manuel des enfans et des adolescens. J.-J. Rousseau auroit pu donner un nouveau modèle. La reine Fantasque ne laisse rien à désirer" (C.F., XXXVII, 38). Unfortunately for the genre, however, Rousseau did not choose to use it again, and the editor in his "Notice des Auteurs" bemoans the fact that Montesquieu, for example, did not contribute to it more directly. "Pourquoi Montesquieu, qui se délassoit en composant le Temple charmant de Gnide, n'auroit-il pas fait usage du cadre oriental, si propre à la composition des tableaux, de tous les tons et de tous les sujet" (C.F., XXXVII, 184)?

Throughout the century various collections of fairy stories were published. The editor of Le Cabinet des fées does not speak highly of most of them, however: "On trouve dans tous ces Recueils un choix de Contes de Fées, souvent très mal choisis. Les Rédacteurs semblent y avoir pris à tâche de reproduire le même Conte sous toutes les formes; et dans toutes les collections, tantôt ils font garder l'anonyme aux Auteurs bien connus de ces jolis Ouvrages, tantôt ils attribuent aux plus célèbres les morceaux qu'ils n'ont point écrits. Notre Notice mettra désormais les lecteurs en garde contre les surprises de cette espèce" (C.F., XXXVII, 364). The stories we are to deal with have, therefore, been carefully selected and are, for the most part, representative of their form. It is interesting to note, however, a certain prudishness on the part of the editor, for the fairy tale with the licentious

element is remarkably absent from this collection. Yet we know that such were very popular. The abbé de Voisenon, in the "Discours préliminaire" to his racy story Le Sultan Misapouf et la Princesse Grise-mine remarks:

Vous trouverez sans doute que ce conte est un peu libre, je le pense moi-même; mais ce genre de conte étant aujourd'hui à la mode, je profite du moment; bien persuadé qu'on reviendra de ce mauvais goût et qu'on préférera bientôt la vertu outrée de nos anciennes heroines de romans à celles qu'on introduit dans nos romans modernes. Il en est de ces sortes d'ouvrages comme des tragédies, qui ne sont pas faites pour être le tableau du siècle où l'on vit. Elles doivent peindre les hommes tels qu'ils doivent être et non tels qu'ils sont. Ainsi ces contes peu modestes, où l'on ne se donne pas souvent la peine de mettre une gaze légère aux discours les plus libres et où l'on voit à chaque page des jouissances finies et manquées, passeront à coup sûr de mode avant qu'il soit peu.¹¹

We shall have occasion later to compare the stories in our collection with the others contemporary with them. For the moment let us trust to the editor of Le Cabinet des fées to express the final justification for this study:

L'esprit François a si vite saisi le caractère [du conte des fées]; il s'est si bien amalgamé avec le génie oriental; il a su si bien s'approprier les richesses de l'allégorie, il a mis tant d'amabilité, tant de graces, tant de légèreté dans ce travail, qu'on doit convenir que la féerie est une des plus délicates & des plus ingénieuses branches de la littérature.
(C.F., XXXVII, 32)

Whether the reader agrees with this must be up to him to decide. We shall present the more interesting works in this collection, and by means of them try to illuminate a little known area of the eighteenth century.

The first kind of story we will look at will be the imitations of oriental stories, inspired by the translations of Les Mille et une nuits and the exponent of this type, par excellence, is Thomas-Simon Gueullette. We will then move on to some stories of a less imitative

nature, but in the same vein. The group of satirists whose loose association known as La Société du bout du banc will then be looked at; then we will see what was made of the straightforward fairy story, and finally we will look at the only example in Le Cabinet des fées of a conte philosophique, which is nonetheless closely allied to the tradition of the other stories. In this way it will be possible to examine all the types of story exemplified in the collection and get some insight into this tradition.

CHAPTER I

GUEULLETTE

If we are to discuss these fairy stories largely as a demonstration of a current which shows l'envers du siècle des lumières, we can find no better representative on several levels than Thomas-Simon Gueullette. When we look at the sheer volume of his works in Le Cabinet des fées we realize he is the author we can least afford to ignore in this context, since, in addition to being so prolific, he was extremely popular. Most of his short stories were reprinted several times in France, some were subsequently translated into English, and enjoyed success on both sides of the Channel.¹ Le Cabinet des fées offers us the last printing they received, and includes all his collections of fairy stories, though not in chronological order. The first group to appear in Le Cabinet occurs in volume XIX and is entitled "Contes Chinois, ou les aventures merveilleuses du Mandarin Fum-Hoam"; these were first published in 1723. Volumes XXI and XXII contain "Les Mille et un quart d'heures, contes tartares" which were first published in 1712. Volumes XXII and XXIII, "Les Sultanes de Guzarate, ou les songes des hommes éveillés, contes mogols" of 1732, and finally his earliest collection, "Les Soirées bretonnes" which first appeared in 1712, comes as a sort of afterthought in volume XXXII.

The story of Gueullette's life presents an interesting contrast to the lives of his contemporaries who are more familiar to us. A few of these--le Marquis de Sade, for example--came from privileged circumstances and could devote themselves to their writing without thought of material considerations. Most, however, needed to make a livelihood from their writing. As this was a very uncertain source of income, in the eighteenth century as today, those writers who did not possess Voltaire's commercial acumen were forced to do hack work in order to indulge their literary bent. Among these we have the illustrious examples of Lesage, Rousseau and Diderot, to mention only those whose work has had the most far-reaching influence. On the other hand the seventeenth century had established a tradition of courtly amateurs who wrote mainly to divert themselves. The ladies whose works form the bulk of the first volumes of Le Cabinet des fées are the main examples of these--people who were gifted and cultured, but whose life offered little outlet for their talents. Gueullette falls into neither of these categories. His station in life made it imperative for him to earn a living, but there is no evidence that he resented his work at the Châtelet, or felt that it kept him from doing what he thought of as his true vocation. On the contrary, it was precisely his position as substitut du Procureur du Roi au Châtelet, a position to which he acceded at the age of 26 and which he held till his death, which gave him his considerable standing, and to which he was indebted for his initial entrée into the society of the Italian theatre which was the great pleasure of his long life. When we read his biography, admirably written by a collateral descendant of his in

1938, we have the impression of a long life lived happily among people who loved and respected him, and which brought gratifying success in all areas. He was extremely happily married to his cousin whom he had known since boyhood, and with whom familiarity was a guarantee of harmony; his one regret was not to have fathered any children, but when his wife's niece lost her parents, Gueullette and his wife adopted her, and the couple was obviously devoted to her for the rest of their life. He maintained a close relationship with the main branch of his family which remained in their home town of Noyon, and his only trips outside Paris were to visit them. In his work Gueullette had the satisfaction of continuing the profession of his father, and in doing extremely well at it. Testimony from several colleagues shows that he was well liked by all the people with whom he worked, and law records show that he was certainly a competent lawyer.

Gueullette senior was an enthusiastic theatre-goer, and had been an ardent supporter of the Italian players before they were banished from Paris in 1697. He took his son to see their productions, and communicated to him his enthusiasm. Gueullette, therefore, hastened to the first production given by the Italian troupe when they returned to Paris in 1716. He gave them subsequently many assurances of friendship and devotion. In his capacity as a lawyer he was able to help them with many legal difficulties, and it was he who witnessed several marriages between some of the more famous members of the group. Thanks to his knowledge of Italian, he was able to write translations of the plays being performed and circulate them among the spectators who would otherwise have not understood a lot of the performance; finally,

he wrote several plays for the company, and with the great generosity and lack of desire for self-aggrandizement which characterizes his life, gave the rights of most of these unconditionally either to the whole company or to individuals in it.

When he left Paris for the long summer vacation he had an opportunity to use his theatrical talents even more widely. He set up a theatre in his house at Auteuil, and with other legal friends gave performances--often improvised, upon which they congratulated themselves--of plays or parades. The success of these shows was prodigious. Gueullette himself commented:

Nos divertissements, toujours nouveaux et variés nous attirèrent, outre nos amis priés, un concours étonnant de spectateurs de premier rang. Comme nous n'ouvrions la scène qu'à onze heures du soir, quantité de seigneurs et de dames partirent en poste de Versailles, après le souper du Roi, pour venir prendre part à nos plaisirs. A l'exemple de ce qui se passe à Venise, nous admettions les masques à nos spectacles. Nous donnions le bal ensuite: cela formait des nuits blanches dont on paraissait fort content, et nos amusements produisirent à La Grande, alors la plus fameuse hôtellerie d'Auteuil, plus de 200 pistoles.²

Many of the parades written for these and other occasions survive and ensure a place for their author on the sidelines of the history of the French theatre.

That this man who had so many strings to his bow should take to writing fairy stories is itself proof of the popularity of the genre. Gueullette's axiom seems to have been to provide what people want, and certainly there was a readership which seemed insatiable for stories in the vein of Les Mille et une nuits. Gueullette was a bibliophile of some account and was obviously as closely in touch with the literary tastes of his contemporaries as he was with the works of classical

literature. We have seen that he knew the Italian literary scene; in 1717 he translated into French the Spanish play La Vie est un songe. We may assume therefore that his contes will, on the one hand, reflect the literary preoccupations of his day and, on the other, will reveal the tastes of this man who was firmly situated in his time. We need therefore not expect much in the way of innovation or departure from current forms and ideas, but we might look for felicity of expression, a comfortable conformity to current modes and a general sense of well-being and good spirits.

These are precisely the qualities which the editor of Le Cabinet des fées praises in his introduction to volume XXXII which contains "Les Soirées bretonnes": "La tête pleine de la lecture des livres orientaux, M. Gueullette est un des auteurs qui a le mieux réussi à en imiter la manière, et il en est peu dont l'imagination se soit prêtée comme la sienne à une aussi grande variété de merveilleux" (C.F., XXXII, iii).

The unlikely and irrelevant title is explained in a brief introduction which involves a technique common in the eighteenth century, and familiar to readers of, for example, La Vie de Marianne, whereby an author tries to give authenticity to a work of fiction by claiming that he has found a manuscript and is now simply presenting it to the world. This particular manuscript is from the court of Brittany, and was the favourite reading material of a certain Aliénore, daughter of one Conan Meriadec who was King of Brittany from 680 to 720. This attribution places the stories already in a fairy-story context; the Arthurian tradition originated in Brittany, and the very name evokes ideas of mysterious happenings in mysterious surroundings. The

precision of the dates of the reign of the king in question is an old trick familiar to story tellers who often try to lend credibility to their stories by prefacing them with such remarks as "When my grandfather was a young lad, he knew a man in the village who..." or "as I was travelling in a distant country, I met a traveller who...." In this case Gueullette rather cleverly gives this aura of credibility by being so precise about the date, whilst at the same time allowing for the most incredible adventures because of the very distance of the year chosen.

Despite the title of the collection, this reference at the outset is the only Celtic thing about it, and one wonders why Gueullette bothered at all with a Breton setting. Was he really interested in native Gallic folklore? One can only speculate on that point; if it is the case, one can only regret that he did not indulge this interest further, as there were many other writers who were prepared to imitate the popular oriental forms, and few who exploited the native material. However that may be, we shall see that Gueullette himself became part of the oriental movement, and throughout his short stories seeks inspiration only on very rare occasions from sources which are probably in the popular European tradition.

The oriental setting in this, the first of Gueullette's collections, is similarly very vague, to such an extent that one cannot really call it an oriental setting at all. It is limited to a brief reference at the beginning of the frame story,³ which opens thus: "Il y avoit autre fois un prince nommé Engageant, qui régnoit dans l'Arabie Heureuse" (C.F., XXXII, 1). Thereafter, there is no

specifically oriental reference in the book, all the incidents being set in a series of magic never-never lands. This is a far cry from the elaborately annotated oriental tales Gueullette wrote later when the genre was well established. This shift of interest is an indication of the influence exerted by Galland's translations. Gueullette sets out in the allegorical way which announces the moralising of Les Contes de ma mère l'oye, and their imitations. His subsequent collections, however, while never losing sight of some moral effect, are concerned much more with the creation of an oriental setting. From this briefest of mentions we have already quoted above Gueullette moves in his "Avis au lecteur," at the beginning of the last collection of oriental tales, "Les Sultanes de Guzarate," to the following statement:

Il me reste à dire que ce n'est pas sans raison que j'ai mis à ces aventures, des notes géographiques et historiques un peu plus amples que l'on n'a coutume de le faire en pareil cas, outre qu'il y a nécessairement dans ces sortes d'ouvrages des endroits qui ont besoin d'explication, surtout pour les dames; j'ai cru devoir les appuyer, et principalement ceux qui regardent l'histoire fabuleuse, de l'autorité de la bibliothèque orientale, ou des plus célèbres voyageurs qui ont parcouru ces vastes pays. (C.F., XXII, 215)

For the time being, Gueullette is content to imitate merely the form of Les Mille et une nuits. There is a frame story which concerns Engageant who disappears uncharacteristically on the day when the anniversary celebration of his accession is to be held. All the subsequent stories tell of his adventures, and the adventures of those he meets during his absence. Most of these adventures conclude with vice being punished and virtue rewarded, in the fashion of Perrault. The most obvious example of this is in the story of Princess Bienfaisante and the princes Parlepeu and Franchot, where

it is the kind, virtuous Franchot who gets the girl. Most of the wickedness in the book emanates from witches, giants, sorcerers or other supernatural agents; in this case, however, Prince Parlepeu is an evil-doer on a human level. He is consumed by the passion of jealousy and is prepared first to attempt to kill his brother in order to have Bienfaisante as his wife, and when that fails, tries to kidnap her. Needless to say he comes to a bad end, deciding to take poison when it becomes clear that he will be beaten in fair fight, while the true lovers are to be united. The father of the two princes, King Brigandor, is not as totally evil as his son: "Ce Brigandor étoit un assez bon roi; mais il ternissoit toutes les excellentes qualités qu'il avoit par un excès de cruauté, fondé sur une malheureuse superstition qu'il avoit reçue de ses ancêtres" (C.F., XXXII, 64). As his character is not completely irredeemable, he is allowed a change of heart at the end of the episode and escapes punishment. Flaws of character are therefore allowable if they set in motion a new episode.

All the characters in the stories are, without exception, from the fairy-tale world of kings and queens, and all behave in the either capricious or single-minded way of the heroes of folk-tales. Again in the folk-tale tradition moral qualities are reflected in physical appearance; those who are good are beautiful, those who are bad ugly. At the very outset there is mention, apparently in a tongue-in-cheek way, of the slaves in the happy kingdom of Engageant, but during our brief glimpse of them they are frolicking happily on a jour de fête as blithely as in any Watteau fête galante.

Throughout the stories there are various general statements of a moral nature. For example, quite early in the story, when the dragon Prince Engageant met on his hunt has just turned into the beautiful Princess Adresse, she expresses the sentiment: "Les apparences sont quelquefois trompeuses, et les choses ne nous paroissent souvent criminelles que parce que nous les regardons avec des yeux préoccupés" (C.F., XXXII, 23). A little later the fairy Légère who plays a kind of fairy-godmother role throughout the stories says: "Les biens les plus long-tems attendus sont les plus charmans, et l'on ne sait les goûter dans toute leur pureté, que lorsqu'on les a acquis avec peine. Que la sagesse soit toujours le principe de vos actions, ne faites rien d'indigne d'elle; craignez les dieux, secourez les misérables" (C.F., XXXII, 26).

Innate virtue is not the only way to recompense; special rewards accrue to certain characters on account of their skill or learning, though there is often something equivocal about the route to the reward as the specialized knowledge leads immediately to disaster, and only later to happy outcome; Prince Bel Esprit, for example, is well versed in the lore of herbs.

Je passois à la cour pour un fameux botaniste. En effet, j'avois acquis une connoissance parfaite de tous les simples; et la princesse trouvant ce prétexte merveilleux pour avoir occasion de m'entretenir plus souvent, supplia l'empereur de permettre que je lui enseignasse la vertu et l'usage des herbes et des plantes; elle l'obtint aisément; ainsi j'étois continuellement à ses pieds, sans qu'on pût avoir le moindre soupçon de notre intelligence. (C.F., XXXII, 34)

This fatal knowledge is indirectly the cause of the emperor's subsequent outrage, for as soon as he realizes what is really going on,

he imprisons his daughter and banishes Bel Esprit to the island of the lions; there, thanks to his knowledge of herbs, he recognizes the plant lionée which gives immunity against lions to its bearer.

In the next episode, Prince Entendement nearly comes to grief because of his intellectual pursuits:

J'étois un soir dans mon cabinet, où, pour me délasser d'avoir expédié plusieurs affaires étrangères, je voulus passer quelques moments à lire; je pris pour cet effet le premier livre qui se trouva sous ma main, et ce fut justement le Traité de la Métempsicose de Pythagore; ce fameux philosophe, fils d'un habile sculpteur de Samos, avoit embrassé une doctrine particulière, et prétendoit que nos ames passoient successivement dans les corps d'autres hommes, ou dans ceux des bêtes. (C.F., XXXII, 44)

Through magical intervention, Entendement himself acquires the capacity to transfer his own soul, which nearly brings about his death when he reveals the secret to his treacherous favourite. Ultimately, however, the knowledge serves him in good stead, as in the final episode of the whole series, he is able to transfer his soul and intelligence to an elephant and thereby vanquish the fierce rhinoceros which was one of the guardians of Princess Brillante.

Scholars have one overriding reason to take cognizance of Les Soirées bretonnes on account of one famous incident, which goes as follows:

Ils rencontrèrent en leur chemin, un grand nombre d'officiers de l'empereur Fantasque, qui, surpris de la figure extraordinaire de ces trois étrangers, s'arrêtèrent assez long-tems à les considérer. Ensuite, les ayant abordés, ils s'informèrent d'eux s'ils n'avoient pas vu dans la forêt le cynogefore de l'empereur, qui s'étoit perdu depuis deux jours par la faute de celui qui le conduisoit, et qui étant à demi yvre s'étoit endormi au pied d'un arbre: le cynogefore étoit une espèce de chameau, très rare dans le pays: il coûtait des sommes immenses, il n'y avoit que l'Empereur qui pût en avoir

un et il étoit destiné ordinairement à porter les provisions de bouche et la colation lorsque ce prince alloit à la chasse. Engageant et la Princesse assurèrent qu'ils n'avoient pas rencontré cette bête; mais le médecin Mirliro ayant demandé aux officiers si cet animal n'étoit pas boiteux au pied gauche de devant; le philosophe Indigoruca, s'il n'étoit pas borgne de l'oeil droit, et le sauvage Barbario, s'il n'étoit pas chargé de sel et de miel; les officiers, surpris de ces demandes, qui étoient si conformes à la vérité, et croyant que les étrangers donneroient à l'empereur des nouvelles du cynogefore, les prirent de vouloir bien venir au palais, et les y conduisirent dans cette espérance. L'empereur qu'un de la compagnie qui avoit pris les devants, avoit instruit de la rencontre qu'ils avoient faite de ces étrangers, les reçut d'un air fort affable, et les ayant interrogés au sujet du cynogefore, fut très-surpris d'apprendre d'eux qu'ils n'avoient point vu cet animal, et qu'ils n'en avoient ainsi parlé que sur des présomptions qu'ils croyoient certaines. Il crut d'abord que les princes se moquoient de lui et étoit sur le point de faire éclater contre eux toute sa colère, lorsqu'on lui vint annoncer que le cynogefore étoit retrouvé, et qu'il revenoit tout seul au palais. Mais par quel prodige, s'écria l'empereur, avez-vous pu parler si pertinemment d'une chose que vous n'aviez jamais vue..., et quel secret avez-vous pour deviner si juste?

Je vais vous expliquer le mien, dit le médecin Mirliro: j'ai demandé si le cynogefore n'étoit pas boiteux, parce que sur le chemin de la forêt ayant remarqué les traces de cet animal, je m'aperçus que la symétrie de son allure étoit faussée, écartée, et qu'il avoit foulé la terre du pied gauche de devant, autrement que des autres pieds; de-là je conjecturai qu'il étoit boiteux de ce côté-là.

Et moi, dit le philosophe Indigoruca, si je me suis informé de vos officiers, si le cynogéfore n'étoit pas borgne, c'est qu'ayant, ainsi que ce fameux médecin, examiné ses pas et connu qu'il avoit passé dans un petit sentier dont les deux côtés étoient couverts d'herbes, j'ai remarqué que quoiqu'elle fût beaucoup plus belle et plus touffue à droite qu'à gauche, le cynogefore n'avoit point touché à celle qui est à droite, et n'avoit mangé que de celle qui est à gauche. J'ai fait là-dessus des réflexions très-justes, en assurant que cet animal étoit borgne de l'oeil droit, puisqu'au lieu de choisir naturellement la meilleure herbe, qui étoit de ce côté-là, il n'avoit touché qu'à celle qu'il avoit vue à sa gauche; et je ne me suis pas trompé, comme vous voyez, dans le jugement que j'en ai fait.

L'empereur Fantasque fut surpris de deux réponses si subtiles; il admira l'esprit du philosophe et du médecin, mais il eut encore plus lieu de s'étonner de celui du sauvage Barbario, qui en contrefaisant une espèce de baragouin étrange s'expliqua en ces termes: il est inutile de vous dire qu'ainsi que les deux hommes qui viennent de parler, j'avois fait les mêmes observations aux traces du cynogefore, mais comme ils se sont expliqués avant moi ils m'en ont ôté l'honneur. J'ai fait seulement entendre à vos officiers que cet animal devoit être chargé de sel et de miel

en voici la raison: j'ai remarqué en deux endroits différens, que le cynogefore s'étoit reposé; et ce par l'impression de la forme de son corps; au premier je vis deux brebis qui s'attachoient obstinément à brouter l'herbe, et quoique je fisse pour les en éloigner, elles préférèrent toujours cet endroit à tous ceux qui étoient à l'entour; personne n'ignore que les brebis aiment extrêmement le sel, je conclus de-là que le cynogefore en portait sur lui, et qu'il en avoit sans doute répandu quelques grains en se couchant à cet endroit; pour ce qui regarde le miel, cela ne m'a pas été plus difficile à deviner: on sçait que les mouches qui le travaillent, l'aiment beaucoup, et qu'il les attire à lui. Dans le lieu où le cynogefore se reposa pour la seconde fois, il n'y avoit aucunes herbes, point de fleurs, ni rien qui marquât que des mouches y eussent leur retraite; et en voyant là une aussi grande quantité se promener sur la terre, où il étoit couché, et en retourner les petits grains, je jugeai qu'il falloit absolument qu'elles y eussent été conduites par la douceur du miel dont devoit être chargé le cynogefore.

L'empereur eut tout lieu d'être content des réponses des princes; il aimoit les gens d'esprit, il en trouvoit tant dans ces trois bizarres figures d'hommes qu'il les pria..., de loger dans son Palais et de manger à sa table.... (C.F., XXXII, 119-123)

Anyone who has read Zadig will have no difficulty in recognizing the parallel incident of le chien de la reine et le cheval du roi. J.-E. Gueullette points out that our author was by no means the first to use this incident, but that he probably used an Italian source, Peregrinaggio di tre giovani figliuoli re di Serendippo. Critics are agreed that Voltaire's episode is taken from d'Herbelot's Bibliothèque orientale, though the editor of Le Cabinet des fées wishes to attribute it to a borrowing from Gueullette: "M. de Voltaire n'a pas dédaigné cet ouvrage de M. Gueullette; il y a pris le sujet d'un des épisodes les plus agréables de son roman de Zadig." The story is an excellent one, and it is not surprising that it should have been used twice.

"Les Soirées bretonnes" is the shortest of Gueullette's groups of contes, and that which received least publicity. We already see

in them though some of Gueullette's principal preoccupations: it is clear that he is an exponent of the more general themes of fairy stories, as we see everywhere the happy and conventional ending of the good being rewarded and the bad being punished. We are in the realm of princes and princesses whose desires are thwarted by the arbitrary behaviour of kings and queens, but who are helped by the agency of various kinds of supernatural beings. We shall see these aspects of Gueullette's stories repeated in the larger and better-known collections.

We see, however, that he is most concerned--despite the title--with oriental themes, as befits someone who is going to publish much more substantial collections of stories borrowed from the Orient. The episode of the cynogefore and the idea of the transference of the soul into various kinds of bodies are thoroughly oriental in concept; Gueullette shows us at the outset of his production of stories that he is an avid follower of the oriental vogue.

Before going on to examine the other collections, however, we should look at the main source of this oriental vogue, so that we can better understand exactly what is being imitated.

CHAPTER II

THE WORD "ORIENTAL" IN THE CONTEXT OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

Although mention was made of Perrault as a source of inspiration for "Les Soirées bretonnes," it was not necessary to discuss him at length for various reasons: first, Gueullette was not primarily concerned with the French tradition of fairy stories; secondly Perrault will be touched upon during a discussion of authors whose subject matter is more germane to his, and finally many books are available which look at his contes from many different points of view.

When we come to a discussion of Gueullette's oriental tales, however, we must look first at Galland's translation of Les Mille et une nuits¹ as they provide the impetus for all the remaining stories of Gueullette which will be discussed; and as oriental tales occupy a very large proportion of Le Cabinet des fées, we must examine their source. The great volume of oriental tales of one kind or another make it impossible to examine all of them; specific examples will therefore be discussed in order to see what foreign elements in the original were most easily imitable, and which became, through this imitation, the most obviously exotic features which could be absorbed into French literature, and which we find used with inimitable effect by Voltaire.

The first point to be made when we speak of "oriental literature" is that already when we are dealing with Galland, who was an orientalist of no mean achievement, and who got his material from impeccable sources, we already have a degree of removal from authenticity. Gentle Galland and the editors of Le Cabinet des fées share the same ideas of bienséance. Nowhere in either do we come across any of the licentiousness which was to become the stock-in-trade of the "oriental" tales of, for example, the abbé de Voisenon. All the stories we shall be dealing with are very proper and contribute to the dream-like quality which was the property of the vague impression of the Orient held by the average reader of the eighteenth century. The great English orientalist, anthropologist and explorer of the nineteenth century, Sir Richard Burton, mentions the word "dream" in the context of the impression received by European readers from Galland. Epater les bourgeois was one of Burton's favourite occupations as he chafed against the strictures of Victorian society; nevertheless he was deeply concerned with authenticity when he translated The Arabian Nights into English and may be trusted in the following expression:

Galland's fragment has a strange effect upon the Orientalist and those who take the scholastic view, be it wide or narrow. De Sacy does not hesitate to say that the work owes much to his fellow-countryman's hand; but I judge otherwise: it is necessary to dissociate the two works and to regard Galland's paraphrase, which contains only a quarter of The Thousand Nights and a Night, as a wholly different book. Its attempts to amplify beauties and to correct or conceal the defects and the grotesqueness of the original absolutely suppress much of the local colour, clothing the bare body in the best of Parisian suits. It ignores the rhymed prose and excludes the verse, very rarely rendering a few lines in balanced style. It generally rejects the proverbs, epigrams and moral reflections which form the pith and marrow of the book; and worse still, it disdains those finer touches of character which are

often Shakespearean in their depth and delicacy and which, applied to a race of familiar ways and thoughts, manners and customs would have been the wonder and delight of Europe.... But those who look only at Galland's picture, his effort to 'transplant into European gardens the magic flowers of Eastern fancy,' still compare his tales with the sudden prospect of magnificent mountains seen after a long desert march: they arouse strange longings and indescribable desires; their marvellous imaginativeness produces an insensible brightening of mind and an increase of fancy-power, making one dream that behind them lies the new and the unseen, the strange and unexpected--in fact all the glamour of the unknown.²

We must not imagine therefore that, like Burton, we have to deal with Les Mille et une nuits in their entirety. All that need concern us is precisely that part of them and that form of them available in the eighteenth century, so for our purposes it is more interesting to note those elements of the original that Galland preserves rather than those he omits. We can then discuss Gueullette's imitation of these features, and later Voltaire's isolation of certain of them in his pursuit of a different end.

The first aspect of the stories of Galland and Gueullette that we must take into consideration is that of structure. Now although it is possible to imitate successfully the types of incident which recur throughout Les Mille et une nuits, to reproduce a certain amount of local colour through the use of authentic names and the introduction of exotic sights, sounds, smells and products, and to take over the general idea of the framework, what it is extremely difficult to do is to give to a conscious, composed work the quality of this heterogeneous collection which had passed through the mouths of countless story-tellers, which had absorbed currents from several traditions and which often reveal those enigmatic details frequently found in folk literature of all kinds--remnants of some forgotten tradition

which are perpetuated uncomprehendingly by tellers, and which most convincingly show the antiquity of the content. The whole is like a beach of pebbles washed there by a fast-flowing glacial river; some are polished, some rough; some from one kind of geological stratum, some from another; some veined with several kinds of stone. Close inspection reveals different colours, different textures, but the view from a distance is of a homogeneous mass, sparkling here and there, mat for the rest.

The technical details which result in this quality are hard to assess, but if we isolate one or two set pieces from each of the works in question, we may get some intimation of the differences. Let us take as our first example a relatively well-known story--which will ensure that we are dealing with successful elements--and look at "The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor." At the very end of Sindbad's adventures, we come across a detail, which recurs at the end of many stories, which gives us a clue as to the way in which good stories were regarded; Sindbad, after his final voyage, recounts his adventures to the caliph Haroun al Rachid. "Il trouva cette histoire et les autres que je lui racontai, si curieuses, qu'il chargea un de ses secrétaires de les écrire en caractères d'or, pour être conservées dans son trésor" (C.F., VIII, 27). A good story, then, is a precious possession, has its existence apart from the teller or the listener; as such, therefore, the only unity it requires is internal, and its relation to any other story may be tenuous in the extreme. The idea of a story being a valued possession has been current until recently among Canadian Eskimos: a good story belonged to one specific story-teller, and permission for someone else

to tell it had to be given or bequeathed by its "owner." Such is the case with the Sindbad stories; each of the voyages can stand on its own and none has any necessary connection with the others. In fact, the grouping of them together in this way must surely be a somewhat arbitrary affair; stories of fantastic voyages must have had independent currency for a very long time previously. The manner of the grouping as it stands is certainly not without interest, however. The whole episode begins in the manner of many of the Arabian Nights stories, with a humble character who serves as our introduction to the more highly-placed members of society. This is in keeping with the whole tradition of folk literature; whether it is made explicit in the narrative or not we see kings, princesses, rich merchants or wealthy widows through the eyes of the common folk. This phenomenon gives rise to such stock expressions as: "Ils avaient une fille plus belle que le jour," or "his lands stretched farther than one could ride in a year," or "They lived happily ever after." Here the porter, who plays the role of the introductory character, also acts as the unifying element in the narrative. It is to him that Sindbad recounts his adventures, and the similarity in their names--the porter is called Hindbad--enables us to see them as two sides of the same coin, or as a mirror image, the one reflecting badly the success of the other. The business which is performed between them at the end of the recounting of each voyage takes on a liturgical quality, which again is part of the stuff of folklore. Each day Sindbad gives the porter a hundred gold sequins and dismisses him along with the other guests, enjoining them to return the following day.

As for the stories themselves, almost the only thread of continuity in them is the artificially imposed one of their having occurred to the same individual. In the case of the last two, there is an additional connection, as the last voyage is undertaken as a consequence of the events of the previous one. In the sixth voyage Sindbad brings back gifts and messages from the king of Serendib for the caliph Haroun al Rachid, and the seventh is undertaken at the request of the latter in order to reciprocate in appropriate fashion. Given this very loose thread of continuity, the effect is of accumulation rather than of development. When the caliph asks him to go on the seventh voyage, Sindbad replies: "Je suis prêt à exécuter tout ce que m'ordonnera votre majesté; mais je la supplie très-humblement de songer que je suis rebuté des fatigues incroyables que j'ai souffertes" (C.F., VIII, 15-16). In fact we have no evidence of this building up of fatigue from the content of the stories, and we have the impression that chronology plays no part in them. The dénouement of the last depends upon Sindbad's dexterity with bow and arrows which was a sport he had learned as a youth, and he now seems no less skilful or less agile than at that time.

The actual voyages themselves show little significant variety in pattern, but there is nevertheless a recognizable order in their sequence. There are seven voyages all told, so although we do not have the ultimately significant three or nine, we do have a number common in folk literature, reflecting the cosmic significance of a week. There is symmetry, too, in their order, as the first adventure is the simplest of the collection and thereafter the complexity increases to the fourth--middle--voyage, which is the most complex, and after that the successive

adventures become simpler. So in the first adventure Sindbad meets with only one potentially fatal situation which has a simple solution, whereas in the fourth there are two such situations, each much more involved than the one in the first and each requiring a much more complex solution.

As for the content of the Sindbad adventures, it is the stuff that fairy stories are made of. Among the mythical beasts are the horse from the sea, the roc, the one-eyed giant, the old man of the sea and the prodigiously intelligent elephants, who lead Sindbad to their own burial ground so that he does not have to kill any more of them in order to get ivory. Galland, who exercised considerable censorship in his publication, still left much of the material which more squeamish editors would have excised. Thus in the third voyage the cannibalistic giant roasts the captain of Sindbad's ship on a spit and eats him; later in the same voyage there is a rather vivid description of Sindbad's shipwrecked companion being devoured by a snake. In the fourth voyage there is further cannibalism when all Sindbad's fellow sailors are fattened up to be eaten by the natives, and further the gruesome account of Sindbad's being buried alive by his dead wife.

Despite the fact that it is Sindbad himself who is telling the story, he makes little attempt to make himself into the dazzling embodiment of all virtue we might expect, but remains the amoral hero whose role is the passive one of being the vehicle for wonderful adventures and whose great virtue is his capacity for survival. He survives the burial episode by killing the live spouses who are similarly

buried and purloins the meagre food supplies which they bring with them to the grave. In the sixth voyage, although the survivors of the shipwreck supposedly share equally such rations as they can rescue, Sindbad outlives them all because he has managed to conceal additional supplies about himself. He therefore not only survives but by the end of a series of adventures undergoes the traditional transition of the folk hero from that of lack (which in Sindbad's case may be argued to be comparative) into that of fulfilment.

This transition is rather complex, as simultaneously with it and dependent upon it we have the parallel transition of Hindbad. In the western fairy story tradition we are accustomed to see the poor boy who becomes rich--which may be seen as wishful thinking on the part of those from whose class the tale originates. In oriental tales of the limited kind we are considering here, it usually turns out that the "poor" boy was born into more favourable circumstances and is poor only temporarily and through some accident. Identification on the part of the teller is often with a lowlier character, so that the amelioration process involves two wide swaths, which have a more comprehensive effect than the steep vertical rise with which we are more familiar. It also means, of course, that the identification figure does not attain dizzy heights of limitless power and wealth, but achieves prudent ease, which could conceivably be within the reach of teller or listener. In this case Sindbad becomes richer at the end of each of his voyages and at the end of the telling of it the porter has also become richer by several hundred sequins, so that there is a double amelioration by the end--that of Sindbad, whose riches are increased

through the miraculous acquisition of goods at the end of each voyage, and that of the porter, who, because he is finally the possessor of eight hundred sequins, is able to retire from his burdensome trade as porter.

If the progress of the two characters is double, so also is the moral. The first lesson is that one should not be jealous of the apparent good fortune of others, because in order to obtain it they may have had to endure hardships which one would not oneself be prepared to undergo under any circumstances. As the porter says: "Il faut avouer, seigneur, que vous avez essuyé d'effroyables périls; mes peines ne sont pas comparables aux vôtres" (C.F., VIII, 27). The second moral declares that virtue brings its own reward in the form of material well-being. Hindbad says: "Vous non-seulement méritez une vie tranquille, vous êtes digne encore de tous les biens que vous possédez, puisque vous en faites un si bon usage et que vous êtes si généreux" (C.F., VIII, 27). This, however, is hardly an unbiased judgement as it is the porter himself who has been the beneficiary of Sindbad's generosity. If the rich are shown as being self-centred in the personage of Sindbad, then the poor, as exemplified in the porter are no less absorbed with their own survival.

The elements of "folkishness" which had contributed to the maintenance of Les Mille et une nuits as a popular and later as a literary tradition in the Orient were probably not the features which were most consciously appreciated among the élite coterie of readers of such things in eighteenth-century France--though given the popularity of *Gil Blas*, for example, one must assume some measure of interest in the

lower strata of society. The other features of the stories, however, must have been as attractive to an eighteenth-century audience as they were in the Orient hitherto and have been everywhere else subsequently. These features may be summed up as a series of loosely connected stories told in such a way as to place not too great a burden on the memory of either the teller or the listener, a mixture of the fantastic and the cannily practical--usually with considerable emphasis on money and material things--and a satisfying conclusion in which the good are rewarded and the wicked punished. Although the episode of Sindbad the Sailor exemplifies all these characteristics admirably, there is one theme in particular which occurs throughout Les Mille et une nuits which does not occur in them, and of which mention must be made; that is, of course, the love interest.

The question of the purported male chauvinism of Les Mille et une nuits was discussed by Burton and is being discussed more heatedly today when such things are more in the air. It is certainly possible to take different stories and to maintain either side of the argument. In fact, however, if we consider the whole range of Galland's translations we can detect quite distinct areas of origin of different kinds of story, which would not necessarily bespeak male chauvinism; Sindbad is obviously the product of a mobile group of traders, merchants and sea-farers among whom it would be unusual to find women; it is not necessarily significant, therefore, that they play so small a role in the story; though certainly Sindbad is unduly callous when speaking of his wife when it becomes clear that his only interest in her is manifested in his fear that she will die before him and be the cause of his being buried alive.

The situation is quite different--and so is the attitude to women--when the setting is courtly, and the sentiments spoken of are those of refined city-dwellers. The frame story has often been cited as proof of the power of woman-kind in the collection, as Scheherezade controls her own destiny through her wit, yet the women who had been deflowered and put to death by Shahriar before her had no control over theirs, and hers ultimately depends on the vagaries of his mood.

By contrast, we have the tale entitled "Histoire des trois Calenders fils de roi, et de cinq dames de Bagdad." This, whilst having many of the characteristics observed in the Sindbad story--use of a porter as introductory figure, series of unconnected adventures which return us in a ritualistic way to the home base, as it were, magical intervention, heroes interested primarily in their own survival--has a completely different ambiance. This time it really is a woman who conducts the events and plays a dominant role.

At the beginning of the story, the three ladies are living together a life of such independence that the porter--who is the introductory figure in it all--marvels at it. "Il étoit étonné qu'une dame faite comme celle qu'il voyait, fit l'office de pourvoyeur; car enfin il jugeoit bien que ce n'étoit pas une esclave: il lui trouvait l'air trop noble pour penser qu'elle ne fût pas libre et même une personne de distinction" (C.F., VII, 159-160). Overwhelmed by curiosity, he begs to be allowed to know their circumstances. They refuse, but grant that he can stay to supper. It is Amine who pleads on his behalf:

Mes chères soeurs, je vous conjure de permettre qu'il demeure avec nous: il n'est pas besoin de vous dire qu'il nous divertira; vous voyez bien qu'il en est capable. Je vous assure

que sans sa bonne volonté, sa légèreté et son courage à me suivre, je n'aurois pu venir à bout de faire tant d'emplètes en si peu de tems: d'ailleurs, si je vous répétois toutes les douceurs qu'il m'a dites en chemin, vous seriez peu surprises de la protection que je lui donne. (C.F., VII, 166)

These women, therefore, are sufficiently free to keep company with whomsoever they will in defiance of sex or class prejudices and having regard only to the qualities of the individual concerned.

There is a second general characteristic which is typical of an attitude revealed by Les Mille et une nuits and which is at variance with the popular ideas about the Orient. This we might also bear in mind when speaking of Gueullette. It is well illustrated in "L'Histoire que raconta le tailleur." In this story, a young man has a rendez-vous with a woman, the time of the meeting being very precisely limited, as her husband is to be absent from the house only for a short time. The lover summons a barber to shave him and is unable to get him to finish the task as he talks incessantly. Finally, the young man makes his getaway, only to be followed by the barber who, acting on a misunderstanding, and, as he thinks, in the best interest of the young man, is responsible for his discovery, his subsequent pursuit, and ultimately his being lamed for life. Although the barber is now anathema to the young man, the latter has taken none of the measures for revenge which might be expected if he conformed to the ideas of viciousness and cruelty held in Europe about the oriental temper. In addition, the barber is then allowed to tell his story. All this bespeaks a certain element of tolerance and good humour which prevails among the characters who are not strictly courtly, and which is an impression which escapes the reader who is expecting to

have his preconceptions confirmed, and who may do this by relying largely on the behaviour of the powerful for his overall impression. The sense of humour revealed in this story can hardly be called subtle, but its hyperbole makes it fairly typical. Whilst the barber talks endlessly, and finally rather irritatingly to the reader as well as to the young hero, he keeps insisting that his nickname is "the Silent One."

A final generality emerges in the Galland stories which marks them as being from a different culture from the one with which we are more familiar. In this latter, there is an abundance of tales which show that once the die is cast there is no escape from destiny. Les Mille et une nuits, however, is full of tales of how people, by their wit, escape the destiny reserved for them. The frame story is a case in point: Scheherazade manages to escape the wrath of Shahriar by her story-telling ability: in "L'Histoire du pêcheur" the fisherman is to die at the hand of the genie whom he has fished out of the sea in a jar, because the genie had vowed to kill whomever set him free. As a last wish, however, he desires the genie to prove to him that he really was inside the jar. As soon as the genie is inside, the fisherman claps on the leaden seal and imprisons him again. One distinction is to be made as to the source of the decree. Men are able to outwit only that fate willed upon them by those supernatural beings of the bad orders. On the rare occasions when God has decreed the end of someone, then there is no way round it.

This is very different from the majority of Western folk tales; in these the point of the story is to show how the main character has it in his power to change either his own situation or the status quo.

CHAPTER III

GUEULLETTE'S ADAPTATION OF ORIENTAL THEMES

How are we to compare the output of Gueullette with these characteristics? First must be stated the obvious: the stories Galland translated are taken from a living, dynamic tradition. They entered Europe with great thrust and became a significant element in the propagation of the ideas of the Enlightenment. Gueullette had no ambition to be part of that movement; he was a man who liked to please and was sure of success in that desire with an enterprise which had already proved itself so much to the public taste. What is rather strange, however, and noteworthy for its corollary, is that Gueullette was a man of considerable energy and here we find him employing that energy to an end which is essentially passive--that end being to spin out the pleasure afforded by the original translation simply as long as he could, apparently. The corollary, of course, is that a large section of the reading public must also have been similarly passive, since the frequent reprintings of Gueullette's stories testify to their popularity. On the one hand that public was eager to hear of new things and exotic places, but it asked for no more than to hear of them in the comfort and familiarity of its own salon. This indolence affected its intellectual interests also. As Nikita Elisséeff

points out in his book:

La littérature du XVII^e siècle s'était évertuée à pénétrer les ressorts de l'âme et à montrer les conflits amour-devoir, passion-estime, et le lecteur avait fini par être fatigué de la philosophie cartésienne qui fonde la vie sur le raisonnement. D'autre part, les 'Classiques' avaient supprimé le temps et l'espace, le XVIII^e siècle, grand siècle des voyages et des sciences expérimentales, va tout faire pour les retrouver; les esprits cherchent l'évasion et le merveilleux va les charmer.¹

Gueullette's contemporaries seem not to have been put out by any possible flaws in his imitations, but read them, apparently, as continuations of Galland. We, however, would do well to note the differences between conscious imitations and folk expression--as we will do later with the native European tradition--and examine their effect upon the survival of the one--most readers have at least a nodding acquaintance with some aspect of The Arabian Nights--and the fall into obscurity of the other.

Let us look first at "Les Mille et un quart d'heure, contes tartares." This collection, as its title suggests, follows closely the structure of Les Mille et une nuits, but with a noteworthy difference. In the oriental tales the stories are told to entertain, specifically Shahriar, and generally, the reader; however, the plot of the story demands the resolution of the question: will Shahriar kill Scheherazade or will he not? By telling the stories, Scheherazade postpones the moment of the resolution and ultimately decides the resolution. The plot and the structure of Les Mille et une nuits are therefore, tightly bound together in an interesting way. This, however, is not the case with "Les Mille et un quart d'heure." The frame story here involves the calif Shems-Eddin whom we have followed through his humble upbringing to the discovery of his illustrious birth. As

a result of his adventures after his rise to the califate he loses his beloved wife Zebd-el-Catoun in a raid by some Bedouin bandits, and is subsequently blinded. In the hope of finding the divine cure for this affliction, the court physician has undertaken a voyage to Serendib. In his absence he and his son are maligned by the perfidious vizir. The son, Ben-Eridoun, goes to Shems-Eddin and speaks thus:

"Que la miséricorde du Tout-Puissant se déploie sur votre majesté ... que l'ange qui vous présentera un jour devant son trône n'oublie pas une seule de vos bonnes actions, et puissiez-vous jouir à jamais de la félicité parfaite que notre grand prophète promet à ceux qui suivent exactement ses loi." On me nomme Ben-Eridoun, fils d'Abubeker, qui depuis deux ans, ou environ, est parti pour l'isle de Serendib; que le ciel le renvoie bientôt en ces lieux, avec le divin remède qu'il est allé chercher pour vous rendre la vue. Jusqu'à ce moment j'ai entrepris, seigneur, d'entretenir votre majesté tous les jours pendant le peu de tems qu'elle prend pour se délasser l'esprit. (C.F., XXI, 43-44)

Ben-Eridoun has been forced into this situation by the vizir Mutamhid who has told him:

Je serai présent à toutes ces conversations; mais je t'avertis que si le prince, ennuyé de ton entretien, m'ordonne de lui en amener un autre que toi, je te ferai sur le champ couper la tête. (C.F., XXI, 41)

The task of telling the stories is, therefore, externally imposed, and although the fate of Ben-Eridoun depends on it, it will have no effect on the outcome of the main frame story which is that of the king's blindness and mourning. As far as that is concerned, the stories are simply a means of whiling away the fifteen minutes each day which the king takes off from his affairs of state and from his pious devotions. There is, therefore no necessary bond between plot and structure.

A further characteristic of the structure of Les Mille et une nuits and which derived from their being melded from diverse sources is the way in which, at the end of one story, a character will say, as, for example, the aforementioned fisherman:

Tu n'es qu'un traître.... Je mériterois de perdre la vie, si j'avais l'imprudence de me fier à toi. Tu ne manquerois pas de me traiter de la même façon qu'un certain roi grec traita le médecin Douban. C'est une histoire que je te veux raconter; écoute. (C.F., VII, 85)

Or, alternatively, a decision will rest upon whether a given story is more extraordinary than the one told by the preceding teller. There is a whole series of these beginning with the story of the little hunchback and the sultan of Casgar. Four condemned men are to be pardoned if one of them tells a story more amazing than that of the hunchback. In both cases, the stories are rather short and they do not advance the main story.

When we are dealing with consciously composed stories, however, there is a far greater tendency for the sub-stories to be involved with the main plot in a more and more complex way, and for it to become impossible to work out all the threads in one piece. Rather Gueullette has to come back, after the resolution of the main plot, in order to tie up a strand left dangling. The reason for the infrequency of this kind of thing in an oral tradition is obvious: neither the teller nor the listener can keep it all in his head, and the development has to be more or less linear. Written composition, of course, allows for constant referring back and can involve greater complexity. The series of stories which make up the adventures of Outzim-Ochantey, Prince of China, will serve as an example.

When "The Adventures of Sindbad the Sailor" was discussed, it was emphasized that the adventures were isolated stories and had been attached arbitrarily to the person of Sindbad, without in any way suggesting any development in the character of Sindbad himself. "The Adventures of Outzim-Ochantey" is in marked contrast to this and to other stories in Galland, where the systematic recounting of the life story of someone does not occur; it might happen that someone will, in a flashback, tell of his adventures, but the stories told in the third person in Galland either tell of a single incident, as for example "L'Histoire d'Abulhassan Ali Ebn Becar," which deals exclusively with the affair between the Prince of Persia and the sultan's favourite, Schemselnihar, or, if they have a wider scope, are focussed on a specific theme, as in "L'Histoire de Noureddin Ali," in which the life of the hero is recounted, but only insofar as it concerns the ultimate fulfilling of the union between the offspring of the two brothers, whose children were born on the same day and who were made for each other, as it were.

If there is concentration of plot in Gueullette, there is diffuseness of detail and of the manner of telling, so that the dénouement is by no means as easily reached as the simplicity of the plot would lead one to expect. We must remember that the taste to which he was catering was one which was seeking relief from the kind of novels written by Mlle de Scudéry and was looking for a less voluminous kind of reading matter. Individual stories must have some sense of the exotic and must come fairly directly to some kind of climax. It is not insignificant that the title of the collection we are discussing is contracted from

a night to a mere quarter of an hour. The expectation of the reader, therefore, is that his curiosity will be satisfied in a short time, and this is indeed the case. If we compare the story of Outzim-Ochantey with that of Prince Camaralzaman in Galland, we find that in the former there are many more characters whose adventures are recounted in a direct manner, in order that the dénouement of each may be reached without delay, whereas in the latter there are endless hindrances introduced to the uniting of Camaralzaman and the Princess of China, and endless attempts at removing them. In this tradition the happy whiling away of the hours with the elegant embroidering of a plot is as important as the plot itself.

The story of Camaralzaman begins at the court of the father of the eponymous hero, the Sultan Shahzaman. This latter wants his son to marry, and Camaralzaman will have none of it. Simultaneously, a parallel situation prevails in China, where the daughter of the king is resisting his efforts to wed her. The two young people have been observed respectively by the good fairy Maimone and by the wicked genie Danhaseh, who transports the princess to Camaralzaman's bed in order to decide which of the young people is the more handsome. This scene of comparison unfolds in a most leisurely manner; a third judge is called in; the couple are awakened in turn and each expresses his admiration for the other. These expressions are then compared by the judges. From all this there emerge two incidents which are a direct contribution to the plot--namely, the fact that each falls in love with the other, and the exchange of rings effected by Camaralzaman. These two incidents could have been told with much greater dispatch

had that been the interest of the teller. Similarly, when a cure is being sought for the supposed madness into which the two have fallen, there is no urgency for getting the search under way, and we are treated to a long preamble during which several members of the court present themselves to the King of China offering to undertake the "cure" of the princess, and are summarily beheaded when they fail to do so.

In strong contrast to this is an episode at the end of the story of Outzim-Ochantey. Early in his adventures, Outzim-Ochantey has encountered and fallen in love with Gulguli-Chémamé, Princess of Georgia. After many adventures, they are separated on their way back to the court of China and have to make their way back separately. Gulguli-Chémamé wishes to keep her identity a secret, so disguises herself as a man, Souffel. Kamzem, the king's immoral second wife, tries to seduce him. The king finds them alone and his appearance throws them into obvious confusion. Kamzem, enraged by Souffel's obstinacy, tells the king that he/she was offering to go out and kill the blue centaur. The narrative goes on:

Il faut savoir, seigneur, poursuivit Ben-Eridoun, qu'il y avoit aux environs de Nanquin, une petite montagne, au bas de laquelle étoit une caverne, d'où depuis cinq ans à un certain jour, sortoit un centaure bleu, qui venoit jusqu'aux portes de la ville, et y enlevait quelques vaches et quelques boeufs. On avoit beau tirer des flèches contre le centaure, il avoit la peau plus dure que du fer. Le roi Fanfur lui avoit plusieurs fois fait tendre des pièges il les évitoit avec adresse; et quoique ce monarque eût promis des récompenses considérables à quiconque le lui livreroit mort ou vif, personne n'avoit pu en venir à bout, et tous ceux qui l'avoient entrepris y étoient pérés. Mais revenons à Gulguli-Chémamé; cette princesse, après avoir salué respectueusement le roi Fanfur, se retira dans son appartement: elle s'y fit instruire de l'histoire du centaure, et concevant qu'elle en viendrait plus aisément à bout par la ruse que par la force; aidée de l'écharpe enchantée de Gulpenhé, qui lui étoit restée au

moment de sa séparation d'avec le prince de la Chine, elle se détermina aux moyens que je vais raconter à votre majesté. Elle fit demander au roi de la Chine un chariot attelé de deux forts chevaux, de grosses chaînes de fer, quatre grands vases de cuivre, une tonne du meilleur vin, et des gâteaux composés de la plus fine farine.

Fanfur fit donner à Gulguli-Chemamé tout ce qu'elle lui demandoit; elle fit charger le tout sur le chariot, et s'étant fait enseigner la retraite du centaure, elle y conduisit elle-même son chariot la veille du jour qu'il devoit paroître; elle mit d'abord les vases à terre, elle les remplit ensuite du vin qu'elle avoit apporté; et y ayant jeté les gâteaux qu'elle avoit rompus par morceaux, elle se retira dans un petit bois voisin; et après avoir retourné son écharpe pour se rendre invisible, elle y passa la nuit sans inquiétude.

A peine l'aurore commençoit-elle à paroître, que la princesse se réveilla; elle vit distinctement, du lieu où elle étoit, le centaure bleu sortir de sa caverne. Il fut étonné de voir les quatre vases de cuivre, l'odeur du vin l'en fit approcher; il mangea d'abord quelques-uns de ces morceaux de gâteaux qu'il trouva d'un goût exquis; il dévora avidement le reste et avala ensuite tout le vin; mais il y en avoit une si grande quantité, qu'il lui porta bientôt à la tête; et ne pouvant plus se soutenir, il fut obligé, quelques momens après, de se coucher par terre, et de s'abandonner à un profond sommeil.

La princesse de Georgie qui voyoit tout ce manège, accourut bientôt après avec ses chaînes; elle en lia le centaure bleu, de manière que quand même il auroit eu toutes ses forces, il n'auroit jamais plus s'en débarrasser, et l'ayant mis avec assez de peine sur le chariot, elle monta dedans, et le mena ainsi à Nanquin, dont on lui ouvrit toutes les portes. (C.F., XXI, 285-288)

Here we have a blow-by-blow account of the situation with absolutely nothing extraneous to the matter in hand. The great density of facts in this short passage gives some indication of the speed at which the narrative moves, and the absence of any dwelling on details which do not advance the plot.

Gueullette seems a little more restrained than his model in the evocation of the supernatural. In the oriental tales, fairies, witches, genies and other such creatures move in and out of the narrative with great ease and frequency, so that the question of verisimilitude never

arises. In contrast, we find Gueullette, in an incident in the same story, trying to justify an extraordinary occurrence in terms of a normal phenomenon. The wicked Princess Gulpenhé, who has herself designs on Outzim-Ochantey, tries to eliminate Gulguli-Chemamé as soon as she knows her to be a rival. Gulguli-Chemamé recounts the incident:

Je m'étois assoupie, seigneur, en vous attendant..., et je dormois paisiblement, lorsque cette princesse, qui a une double clef de ma garde-robe, a entrepris sans doute de m'ôter la vie. Elle avoit empli, à ce qu'on peut croire, cette sarbacane d'une poudre empoisonnée, et se préparoit à me la souffler dans le nez, quand, me réveillant en sursaut, j'ai éternué avec tant de violence, qu'au lieu de recevoir la poudre, je la lui ai envoyée toute dans la bouche. Ce poison, suivant les apparences, est si subtil, que sur le champ elle est tombée à la renverse, et que vous la voyez prête à expirer. (C.F., XXI, 275)

When one is securely in the world of the supernatural, one is perfectly comfortable with incidents of this kind, which take place through the intervention of some invisible being. One is less comfortable, however, when logic and reason are brought in in this way, and one's suspension of belief either overreaches or falls short of the situation.

During the discussion of this story, the reader will have been made aware of another source of discomfort in Gueullette's stories--that is to say the names he gives his characters. Presumably out of a desire for authenticity, he burdens his creations with names like Outzim-Ochantey and Gulguli-Chemamé. In each case he provides a footnote which gives the meaning of the name; nonetheless, we are hard put to it to pronounce them trippingly on the tongue.

If these criticisms can be justified, it would seem that that is not the case of a criticism levelled by the critic Martino who speaks in rather scathing terms of Gueullette's search for material:

Comme, après tout, il ne pouvait pas toujours créer sa matière de rien, il est allé la chercher où il savait la trouver, dans la Bibliothèque Orientale de d'Herbelot ou dans les recueils des Lettres Edifiantes. Quand ces sources originales lui ont fait défaut, il a simplement 'habillé à la tartare' quelque vieux conte italien ou français.³

In fact, it would seem that it is in this latter aspect that he most nearly resembles the authors of Les Mille et une nuits in that he is digging into the resources of an accessible literature and telling these tales in a novel way. "Les Trois Bossus de Damas" is one of the most successful stories in the collection, but the credit for it cannot go to Gueullette. He expresses his gratitude to his public in the "Avis au lecteur" before "Les Sultanes de Guzarate":

... il [le public] ne m'a point chicanés sur les aventures des trois Bossus de Damas, de mes Mille et un quart d'heure quoiqu'il ne lui ait pas été difficile de connoître qu'elles étoient prises des facétieuses nuits de Straparolles, et qu'elles ayent même fait la matière des trois ou quatre scènes jouées il y a près de quatre-vingt ans par des bateleurs, et imprimées sous le nom de la Farce des Bossus.
(C.F., XXII, 210)

It is one of the most successful stories of the collection, mainly because it is one of the few witty ones. In many stories the characters themselves laugh, but at best they bring a puzzled smile to our faces. When the blue centaur laughs his way through the streets of Nanquin at various sights which meet his eyes, we do not find ourselves tempted to laugh very heartily at the fact that the man who is weeping over his presumed son's tomb had, in fact, nothing to do with the youth's conception, it being the work of the priest who is now loudly conducting the funeral service, cheerful at the sight of the mourning man's mistaken bereavement. (This is very convincingly imitated from Galland where often the calif Haroun al Rachid is given

to laughing most heartily at the distressing misfortunes of his subjects.) The story of the hunchbacks of Damascus is, however, genuinely comical, albeit with a typically folkloric element of the macabre lurking in the background. The first part of the story concerns a murder committed by one of the three identical hunchbacked brothers. They refuse to reveal the identity of the murderer, so they are all set free for fear the innocent be punished. They separate and "Babekan" sets himself up as a prosperous cutler. His impecunious brothers come begging at his door and he turns them away. They return in his absence and his wife takes pity on them. She is forced to conceal them in the wine cellar, however, then Babekan returns unexpectedly. When she tries to shoo them out in the morning, she finds, not surprisingly, that they are dead drunk. She hastily summons a porter from Sirri-Hiffard, whose inhabitants, a footnote informs us, have a reputation for simple-mindedness, planning to get rid of both for the price of one. The porter, having dumped one body in the Tigris, is astonished, on returning for his payment, to find what appears to be the very same body in the woman's house. She upbraids him and he sets off again and dumps in the second hunchback.

Il revenoit alors plein de joie vers Nohoüd, ne doutant point que le bossu ne fût allé à fond, lorsqu'en tournant le coin d'une rue, il vit venir à lui un homme qui tenoit à la main une espèce de lanterne: il pensa mourir de frayeur à la vue de Babekan, qui, un peu pris de vin, retournoit chez lui: il le suivit pourtant quelques tems, et voyant qu'il prenoit le chemin de la maison où il avoit déjà été prendre les deux bossus, il le saisit brusquement au collet: Ah, ah, compère, lui dit-il, vous croyez donc me jouer ainsi toute la nuit, voilà déjà deux fois que vous vous moquez de moi, mais il y aura bien du malheur si vous m'échappez à la troisième; alors, comme il étoit vigoureux, il lui jeta son sac sur la tête, et l'y ayant fait entrer malgré lui, il en lia l'ouverture avec une grosse corde, et courant droit au pont, il y jeta le bossu et le sac.

(C.F., XXI, 144)

Nohoud's dismay when she hears of this incident can be imagined, but, making the best of it, she uses it as an excuse not to pay the porter at all. Fortunately for all concerned, the calif has been prowling the streets and has had the hunchbacks fished out of the river, so all ends well when the whole incident is explained.

The story is one of the most successful in Gueullette. Significantly, it contains many of the authentic elements of Les Mille et une nuits. The milieu it is set in is low enough to allow a certain cheerful earthiness. The wife, rather than being the stereotyped sex-object, has as her chief characteristic a familiar peasant miserliness. Although she is in desperation to get rid of her two unwanted guests, she does not lose sight of her innate instinct for economy. In addition, the exploitation of an eastern characteristic sits very well with the story: there are many examples in Les Mille et une nuits of the calif wandering through the streets of Bagdad to see what his subjects are up to.

It would seem from this that Gueullette is better at borrowing a plot rather than a form; when he uses an already worked-out story and adapts it with a few judicious strokes, it works well; when he is using his own material, and forcing it into a borrowed mold, it tends to wear out its interest--at least for the modern reader--before the end.

This is not the case with "Les Contes chinois, ou les aventures merveilleuses du mandarin Fum-Hoam." This collection, written in 1723, is much livelier, and shows that Gueullette had used the eleven years which had elapsed between it and "Les Mille et un quart d'heure" to adapt the material to his own style more successfully. The later

collection is shorter and more pithy than the earlier, and the frame story, as well as being more ingenious than its predecessor, has a playful twist at the end which is wholly missing from the tone of "Les Contes tartares." Although Gueullette has always his model in mind, we have a more vivid impression of his adapting it to his own century and of his injecting into it elements of a more contemporary interest, which make it therefore more interesting for us. Throughout the discussion of this collection, mention will be made of some of the more illustrious of his contemporaries. To compare their writings with those of Gueullette would not be fitting, but one does have the impression from "Les Contes mogols" that they breathe the same heady air, and are subject to the same influences.

The frame story allows of greater freedom than any Gueullette has used heretofore. Gulchenraz, the Muslim princess from Georgia, has, after a series of adventures, married Tongluk, "idolater" King of China. This difference of religion is their only source of friction and the king is resolved to find a solution:

Ah! madame, s'écria Tougluk, je le jure par ma tête, qu'elle serve de but aux flèches de mes plus cruels ennemis, si jamais j'entreprends de vous gêner dans votre religion; mais je me flatte que vous ne serez pas toujours si entière dans vos résolutions, et que l'illustre Fum-Hoam vous fera connaître visiblement votre erreur; il m'a assuré que bientôt les Chinois et les Georgiens seroient soumis à la même divinité. S'il ne vient pas à bout de ce qu'il m'a promis, je jure, par le même serment, non-seulement de me ranger de votre parti, et de reconnaître votre Mahomet pour le véritable envoyé de Dieu, mais encore de détruire tous les pagodes de mon empire, et de fouler aux pieds les statues qui sont les objets de nos adorations. (C.F. XIX, 30-31)

It is not quite clear why the simple recital of the adventures of those creatures the soul of Fum-Hoam inhabited during its many incarnations

should be used as a means of converting Gulchenraz, but a watertight rationale for the stringing together of stories of this kind is by no means a requisite of the form; if we were meant to take it seriously it could be said to be an excuse for an infinite variety of geographic and social ambience. But we are not meant to take it seriously, as by the end we find it was a mere joke. When he finishes the recital, Fum-Hoam turns out to be the long-lost brother of Gulchenraz, and his disguise had the opposite purpose from the one we had anticipated:

Au reste, seigneur, continua Alroamat [l'ancien Fum-Hoam] en adressant la parole au sultan de la Chine, si j'ai feint d'être zélé sectateur de la religion de vos ancêtres, ce n'a été que pour vous engager, par un serment irrévocable, à vivre avec la reine votre épouse dans une même religion, et j'espère qu'un peu de réflexion vous y déterminera sans peine. (C.F., XIX, 360)

He then reveals that the whole conceit of having his soul transmitted from one person to another was meant to underline the ridiculousness of such an idea.

(It should be pointed out, so that the rendering of the full ridiculousness of the concept may be understood, that the "soul" of Fum-Hoam is a very nebulous thing. It has no continuity at all, and although it is meant to "animate" each new body it enters, it is difficult to imagine what this can mean as it has no effect on the person animated, but seems rather to be a detached observer of the crimes of the tyrant Piurasb or the good deeds of the heroic Kader-Bilah alike.)

The final exposure of the conceit takes several pages, and it is our first indication that Gueullette took any interest in the philosophical discussions of his day. The speech in question is a long apology for Islam and an indictment of the idea of the transmigration of souls as a religious doctrine:

En effet, y a-t-il rien de plus contraire au bon sens que la transmigration des âmes d'un corps dans un autre? Pour me prêter aux contes extravagans de vos mandarins de la loi, je vous ai raconté des histoires dans le goût de celles qu'ils récitent à tous momens, et dont quelques-unes sont arrivées; mais non pas à moi, qui n'ai jamais cessé d'être ce que je suis, que lorsque, par la vertu des paroles cabalistiques qui me sont connus, j'ai bien voulu paroître à vos yeux sous une autre figure. Comment, suivant leurs principes, veulent-ils pouvoir se ressouvenir dans un corps de ce qui s'est passé dans un autre? Si cela étoit, et que l'âme passât ainsi de corps en corps, elle seroit bien malheureuse d'être assujétie aux inclinations dominantes de celui où elle réside; car enfin les bêtes féroces conservent toujours la triste et cruelle semence de leur espèce: la ruse et la malice sont héréditaires aux renards et aux singes; la fuite et la timidité est le partage des daims et des cerfs; et c'est bien avilir l'âme que de dire qu'elle ne puisse pas changer les habitudes du corps où elle se trouve. Selon quelques histoires de vos mandarins, les hommes sont irraisonnables pendant que la farouche espèce des bêtes, ainsi que je vous l'ai fait voir, est douée d'un raisonnement très-sensé. Ah! seigneur, vous avez trop d'esprit pour croire de pareilles puérilités; mais entraîné par les préjugés de l'éducation, vous n'avez jamais voulu raisonner sur la religion de vos pères. Est-il possible que vous soyez persuadé avec le peuple, que la nature immortelle des âmes soit soumise à un corps qui est la nourriture des vers, et que parmi la multitude innombrable des âmes il naisse une émulation précipitée pour la préférence de s'introduire dans un corps qui vient d'être formé; à moins que, par un accord fait entr'elles, il ne soit convenu que la première arrivée ait le droit d'être la première reçue dans un corps qui en a besoin. La mort, suivant ce raisonnement, ne serait qu'un nom redoutable, et à toutes ses attaques seroient indifférentes; il seroit égal à l'homme de faire de bonnes ou de mauvaises actions (ce qui répugne à la nature). Vous me direz, suivant le système de vos mandarins et des brakmanes indiens, que les âmes passent dans des corps plus vils ou plus élevés, selon leur mérite ou leur démérite. Mais quel corps vos docteurs, ainsi que les brakmanes chez les indiens, estiment-ils supérieurs aux autres? Celui d'une vache. Cette bête, disent-ils, a quelque chose de divin; l'âme qui y réside espère être bientôt purifiée des péchés dont elle étoit souillée dans ce monde, pour être présentée à leurs dieux, qui ne sont que des monstres ou des êtres imaginaires inventés par la friponnerie de vos premiers sacrificateurs, et soutenus par le libertinage et l'indépendance de ceux qui occupent aujourd'hui leurs places. Une vache? L'animal le plus sale qu'on puisse trouver après le porc, dont vous faites votre mets le plus exquis, et que nous avons en abomination! Et vous croyez sincèrement de pareils discours? Non, seigneur, non, je suis persuadé au contraire, et que ma soeur vous a déjà fait connoître la différence qu'il y a entre une religion aussi ridicule et celle de Mahomet, dont les grandes vérités comprises dans son alcoran sont dignes d'admiration. (C.F., XIX, 360-363)

Now Les Mille et une nuits have often been praised for their religious tolerance; although Jews often appear in the stories, there is very little criticism of their religion. The only harsh words spoken in this context are levelled against the Zoroastrians. Gueullette manages in the passage just quoted and in its continuation to come down on both sides of the fence of religious attitudes. On the one hand his critique of Buddhism makes him sound like a bigoted Christian, familiar in the west, but on the other his eulogy of Islam has something of the spirit of Montesquieu in that it presents a viable kind of religion among exotic people.

A further indication of Gueullette's adherence to the ideas of his time is the moral tone of "Les Contes mogols." The thesis of George May's book Le Dilemme du roman au XVIII^e siècle⁴ is that novelists were forced to pay lip service to the contemporary zeal for clothing all fiction in moral garb. Gueullette accepts this convention, and far from chafing against it, incorporates it easily into his material; this ease gives us to assume that he was on the side of the conventionally-minded public rather than on that of the revolutionary authors. We come across such maxims as : "Les plus grands maux sont voisins des plus grands biens," and "celui qui creuse un puits pour y faire tomber son ennemi s'ouvre très-souvent à soi-même un abîme pour s'ensevelir." It was no doubt the illustration of these and other maxims that made the collection attractive to the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse, who translated it into English in 1740, saying in the "Dedication":

... how diverting soever the work might be, I should not have expended so much time about it, had I not perceived that its main End and Intent was, to Instruct as well as Please, and to recommend an excellent Moral under the agreeable Veil of Allegory and Fable. You will be no less delighted then ... with the discovery at the End of each Tale than you are all

along with the Clearness of the Narration, when you come to perceive, in this admirable Author, that Vice is always punished and Virtue rewarded.⁵

The moral tone, together with a heavy emphasis on the feminine element in the first stories in the collection, bring to mind the atmosphere of a novel of Richardson. In the majority of the early stories, even if the soul of Fum-Hoam does not actually animate the body of a woman, each main episode is recounted by a woman. This makes for a slightly sickening overdose of clothes, sexual wiles and particularly confinements--there are five of these altogether.

Where Gueullette differs from Richardson, however, is that on the whole he presents womankind in a very unflattering light. If virtuous, his heroines are put into a passive situation, and bring shame on their families by becoming pregnant, as in the case of Jezdad, daughter of the Greek shepherd, for example; but far more frequently they are at best capricious and at worst vicious. Mogireddin, King of Agra, courts the wilful Rouz-Behari who proves so incorrigible that he has to resort to many disguises and tricks in order to bring her to heel. He disguises himself as a humble tailor who succours her when she finds herself in dire misery in the middle of a vast plain whither he has had her transported by magic intervention. She finds herself so obliged to him for his kindness that she marries him and they live simply in his tailor's shop. When the king, Mogireddin, is about to pass in procession beneath her window, her husband--who is, of course the same Mogireddin in disguise--insists that she stand on the balcony in a conspicuous manner and watch him pass. Unwilling to see the man, the prospect of happiness with whom she had spurned in her capricious

youth, she tries to resist her husband's order: "une honnête femme ne doit avoir des yeux que pour son mari. J'en conviens, reprit le tailleur, mais comme vous n'êtes pas née pour Mogireddin vous pouvez le regarder sans que j'en prenne d'ombrage." This twisting of the knife is followed by further humiliation when the tailor, who has been summoned to the palace to make clothes for the bride the king is about to take, insists that Rouz-Behari accompany him. Her lesson learned, she is finally restored to her royal position just at the rather embarrassing moment of parturition.

Two of the women, however, are far more villainous and are painted in blacker, more detailed colour than any of the male characters. In each case, they undergo a metamorphosis from people whom we find sympathetic at first to positive monsters by the end. (Gueullette places even less store in the unity of character than did the tradition which he imitates.) Hengu, daughter of a modest shopkeeper, elopes with the aristocratic Cotza-Rechid who promises her a life of bliss. He abandons her two years later in order to marry the governor's daughter. Hengu plots revenge in a most cold-blooded way, abetted by her maid who is a sorceress. Hengu obtains by guile some hair which Cotza-Rechid claims is from his wife's head. She and the maid prepare a spell which is to kill the owner of the hair; in a bolt of lightning and a nice flash of irony, it is Hengu who is burnt up, hoist with her own petard.

The beautiful Alischak, who has hitherto won our sympathy for her many misfortunes, after many adventures becomes the wife of the elderly King of China. She falls in love, and by means of a

sleeping potion which puts the harem guards into a deep sleep every night, conducts a torrid affair with Yvam, the young man who owns the monkey whose story this is. One night she trips over the chief eunuch, Gabao, who realizes that she is up to something, but doesn't know what. Pretending to put the devotion of her husband to a playful test, she wrests from him the promise that if Gabao ever utters another word she might have him put to death. She takes the eunuch into her dressing pavilion where she is preparing to go swimming. Provoked beyond prudence by the sight of her naked body, he exclaims upon her beauty. She has him bound and thrown instantly into the canal. A relative of his in the harem does not let the matter rest and discovers Alischek's adultery, and the lovers are also summarily put to death.

In contrast to this melodramatic atmosphere, Gueullette gives us a hint of the spirit of Marivaux at the beginning of "L'Histoire de Magmu, sage-femme d'Astracan":

J'étois naturellement assez jolie; mais je relevois ma beauté par tant d'art, qu'il étoit impossible de m'échapper quand j'avois entrepris de faire une conquête. Il ne sortoit pas une parole de ma bouche qui ne fût étudiée, & je ne levois ou baissais les yeux que par mystère. Savoir admirablement bien feindre une passion très-vive, soupirer à propos, faire un geste attirant, badiner avec grace, rassembler tous les agrémens d'une muette éloquence dans un seul souris; c'étoit un art dans lequel j'excellois. Enfin, j'avois tant d'envie de surpasser les autres filles de mon âge, qu'attachée sans cesse à mon miroir, j'y employois des heures entières à examiner quel habit relevoit le plus ma beauté, quelle couleur d'étoffe me convenoit le mieux, de quelle manière la plus avantageuse une boucle de mes cheveux voltigeoit en retombant sur mes épaules, de quelle façon le reste de ces cheveux pouvoit se rattacher avec plus d'agrément; comment il falloit ouvrir, fermer et remuer les lèvres avec grace, montrer mes belles dents sans affectation, me présenter avantageusement de face ou de profil, ranger avec adresse le voile que je portois. Enfin, madame, il sembloit qu'un être invisible animât mes gestes & mes actions, & que toutes les parties dont

elles étoient composées fussent polies par les mains de cet habile maître; & je me variois en tant de formes différentes, que me regardant quelquefois moi-même avec admiration, j'adorois, pour ainsi dire, ma propre main, qui savoit donner l'ame de toutes les beautés à un corps qui étoit assez défectueux de lui-même: c'étoit là les filets que je tendois avec tant d'adresse, & dans lesquels je retenois mes adorateurs.
(C.F., XIX, 156-157)

This is one of Gueullette's rare excursions into the domaine of "realism," and its latent cynicism brings to mind the account by Marivaux's Spectator of his returning to the salon of the woman he admired for her simplicity and unaffectedness, and finding her preening and simpering before her looking glass. With his experience in the courts and his intimate association with the Italian actors in Paris and their legal problems, Gueullette was in a position to know the ways of the world. He would also, no doubt, have known Marivaux's text, as the common interest of the two men in the Italian theatre must have made them acquainted.

Perhaps it was the contact with the Italian theatre which gave Gueullette inspiration for "L'Histoire du sauvage Kolao." In 1721 the play Arlequin sauvage had been presented, which was an expression of the century's fascination for the New World. Gueullette does not have any serious moral purpose in his recounting of this tale, but many readers must have welcomed his brief excursion to the Far West in search of inspiration as a welcome change from the east, as they would have been familiar with accounts of the kind of landscape of which he speaks, and would have had expectations of curious behaviour on the part of the American Indian tribes. The accounts of travellers such as the Chevalier de Beauchene and the Baron de Lahontan were widely and enthusiastically read.

Kolao is a chief whose only son dies. Mad with grief he listens eagerly to the tale of a man who had been brought back to life from death's door because his soul had been redeemed from the keeper of souls, Pat-Koot-Parout. As his son is so recently dead, he resolves to brave the journey to the island where the souls of the dead are kept, and hopes that the gifts he bears will persuade Pat-Koot-Parout to let him have his son's soul back. Accompanied by several friends, he reaches the island safely and succeeds in his enterprise. The giant--for such Pat-Koot-Parout turns out to be--summons the soul of the son, gives it the shape of an apple, and ties it carefully in a leather bag. Kolao must return and build a new cabin in which to lay out his son, and until all preparations are complete he must be extremely careful not to open the bag or the soul will return to Pat-Koot-Parout never to be retrieved again. As he needs his hands free to build the cabin, Kolao gives the bag to his wife to hold. She knows the injunction, but like Psyche and Bluebeard's wife she is unable to contain her curiosity; she opens the bag to peer in and the soul of the son flies off for ever.

This tale, apart from the novelty of its setting, has also the merit of a most authentic ring. The description of the journey undertaken by Kolao, the account of the way in which the souls of the good and bad are housed on Pat-Koot-Parout's island, the detail of the drawstring pouch, all make one think that Gueullette got the story rather fresh from its source, and make one wish for more in the same vein.

We find another folk tale--though this time without any criticism of women--in an unfamiliar guise, when Fum-Hoam tells of his adventures

when he animated the body of Prince Kader-Bilah. This story has a preamble about the son born in humble circumstances of exile who restores his father to his rightful throne. After his own accession and the death of his wife, he retires to a castle near Isfahan and takes pleasure in reading a book in which he finds a story which fascinates him. Years ago, the town of Isfahan was plagued with rats. A dwarf appears one day and agrees to rid the town of the rats in exchange for a large sum of money. He sounds a trumpet, and all the rats follow him to their destruction in the river. When it comes to the time of payment, the city fathers give short change. The dwarf's mother demands forty of the most beautiful maidens of the town to be brought to her. The people refuse, and the following morning the daughters of some of the leading citizens are found strangled in their beds. When this continues for five days the people accede to the demand, and bring their daughters so that the witch can chose the most beautiful. She sounds a brazen trumpet, and willy-nilly the girls are obliged to follow her to a tower which has suddenly appeared outside the town. So much for the familiar plot of the story; the structure of the next part of the story follows a perfect Proppian plan. The hero, in a situation of lack (he has no wife), overcomes a monster in order to reach a situation of fulfilment (one of the maidens becomes his). As he does so, he frees the thirty-nine other young men who have previously attempted to release the maidens, thus bringing about a universal state of happiness.

The story of the Pied Piper seems to be attached exclusively to the town of Hamelin in the European tradition, but we find in a

commentary on Browning's poem that the plot is more widespread:

Mr. Baring-Gould's Curious Myths of the Middle Ages shows that the story is a widespread one, and that it is related to the Bishop of Hatto, which he also describes, to Goethe's Erlking, who steals the soul of the child, and to many other similar legends. Mr. John Fiske's Myths and Myth-Makers explains the story on mythological grounds, and its connection with many other forms of folk-lore. He says that "as Tannhäuser is the Northern Ulysses, so is Goethe's Erlking none other than the Piper of Hamelin. And the piper in turn, is the classic Hermes or Orpheus, the counterpart of the Finnish Wainamoinen, and the Sanskrit Gunadhya. His wonderful pipe is the horn of Oberon, the lyre of Apollo (who, like the piper was a rat-killer), the harp stolen by Jack when he climbed the bean-stalk to the ogre's castle. And the father, in Goethe's ballad, is no more than right when he assures his child that the siren voice which tempts him is but the rustle of the wind among the dried leaves; for from such a simple class of phenomena arose this entire family of charming legends.⁵

So Gueullette is following a well-established tradition when he transports the event to Isfahan.

We have seen from some of the above quotations that Gueullette in this collection is not so exclusively concerned with setting out the plot, but takes the occasional pause to digress a little, or to enlarge upon some topic which interests him. He does make it clear at one point, however, that the straight recounting of plot is his main interest. Here is a brief exchange between Gulchenraz and Fum-Hoam:

Les aventures du singe et de la sultane Alischak m'ont fait un extrême plaisir, et je m'attendois à un plus long récit des malices de cet animal. Elles furent sans nombre, madame, reprit le mandarin Fum-Hoam; mais ces petits détails ne feroient qu'ennuyer votre majesté; c'est pourquoi j'ai omis bien des badineries que mes pareils, lorsque j'étois singe, ayant depuis imité, vous n'auriez pas trouvé nouvelles. Je passerai, sous votre bon plaisir, à de nouvelles aventures.

We too, will pass on to new adventures, and see whether in his final collection of oriental tales, Gueullette continues with more

assurance this tendency of revealing the preoccupations of his contemporaries.

In the chronologically last collection of oriental tales by Gueullette, we see him at the height of his achievement in this genre. He has obviously studied the form with great assiduousness so that he can allow himself a certain playfulness we have not seen before. In addition, we realize from the title that there is an element present which has not been made explicit before, and which gives a new dimension to the tales. The full title is "Les Sultanes de Guzarate, ou songes des hommes éveillés, contes mogols." It is the wakeful dreaming which is such an interesting concept, and which might give us a new insight into the world of fairy stories in general. Like dreams, these treat of subconscious experience which surface in fantastic guise, which does not easily yield to immediate analysis; yet, as in dreams, these fantastic experiences often stem from the most mundane and familiar situations. In Gueullette's model, Scheherezade always begins her recital one hour before dawn, so that one is prepared for a dream-like quality in the fusion of fantasy and reality which she produces at that usual hour of somnolence.

Gueullette does not use a nocturnal hour for the telling of his tales, but invents a different conceit, by which he adds an additional dimension to this already complicated fabric. The conceit is somewhat elaborate; it runs thus: Oguz, sultan of Guzarate, married, simultaneously, and at their own request, four beautiful princesses with whom he lived in perfect harmony for many years, each bearing a son. As they all grow older, however, he is tempted

by a Circassian slave, and takes her as a fifth wife--manipulating the laws of Islam in order to do so. The deserted sultanas are desolate, but contain their grief in order that the sultan should not suffer remorse. Oguz, finally curious as to the relative fidelity of his wives consults the sage Cothroob, who recommends a test. The sultan is to pretend to die, but will in fact remain in a secret room whence he can observe the conduct of his wives after his purported death. They are to conceal this event from everyone outside the palace walls for four months and the will is not to be read until that time. Cothroob gives them to understand that they will be given a signal for their future behaviour at that time. (This, incidentally is somewhat different from the frame-stories we have encountered so far in that the reader knows something that the participants do not know. The reader, therefore, shares with Oguz the position of unseen spectator--always a somewhat titillating experience. We are not thereby deprived of the element of suspense, however, as we know no more than does Oguz how the sultanas will react.)

The motivation for the stories is the search for amusement for the sultanas during the crucial four months. Gehernaz, chief among them, is unwilling to participate in anything unseemly. The only acceptable form of entertainment suggested is for travellers staying at the nearby caravanserai to be drugged by the owner, and for them to be brought to the palace to tell their life stories. At no point are they to be told where they are, nor in the presence of whom, and when their stories are ended, they are to be returned discreetly

to the caravanserai; the effect of this operation is to be that they will have imagined it all to have been a dream. In effect what happens is that they all imagine themselves to have died and to have been transported to the Muslim paradise; thus it is not simply to the realm of the ordinary dream to which we are transported, but to the realm of the dream-after-death. In a way there turns out to be justification for this assumption; such sumptuousness as is displayed in the palace has rarely been seen by human eyes, and the beauty of the sultanas emulates that of the houris. Even more to the point, however, is that the sage Cothrobb who has already visited many of the travellers in dreams explaining their fate, now appears to them again, this time to bring to achievement what each had most desired in his life so far. In most cases this is the reuniting of parent and offspring or of lover and mistress, so that Cothrobb plays a god-like role in bringing about the promised resolution of various predicaments.

Gueullette certainly had a feel for this aspect of oriental literature which he must have obtained from sources other than Galland. Although there are many instances of dreams in the complete collections of The Thousand and One Nights (as we can see in the "Motif Index" established by Nikita Elisséeff). Galland himself only introduces two of them into his selection, and those two have only rather limited, incidental interest. We can note, en passant, that Voltaire was also aware of the importance of dreams in the oriental tradition, and uses one to excellent effect in Le Crocheteur borgne, for example. Voltaire's intent, of course, is different from

Gueullette's, which is merely to entertain, but it is interesting to note that dreams seem to be used in this way exclusively in the short story at this time and that Gueullette is thus in the mainstream of this convention. In the oriental tradition, dreams seem to be used particularly as portents of the future, and we recognize an unbroken line from Joseph's dream of the fat and lean kine. Like Joseph, the dreamers in the oriental tales are put into a privileged position because the knowledge they get from their dreams gives them the advantage over their fellows. In addition, they are in contact with a supernatural power in a more direct way than most people.

This aspect of dreaming is amply exploited in "Les Sultanes de Guzarate," because most of the people who are brought to the palace from the caravanserai are in the middle of a journey which they have undertaken at the command of Cothroob who has appeared to them in a dream. The veracity of the dream is assured because Cothroob is in the palace in person, and brings about what has been ordained in the respective dreams. Only implicitly does Gueullette broach the more familiar western idea of the dream as a mirror of reality, or even as a confusion with it, and he reverses the usual position. In Le Crocheteur borgne the dream of Mesrour becomes confused with reality; as he awakens from a drunken stupor: "Il se ressouvint alors de la quantité de liqueur qu'il avait bue la veille: elle avait assoupi ses sens et échauffé son imagination au point qu'il avait cru s'être éveillé, avoir trouvé un anneau, et jouir de tout le bonheur dont il conservait le souvenir."⁶ In "Les Sultanes de Guzarate" we have the reverse effect, where people who are actually

awake imagine that they are dreaming. Mesrour, who, because of his one eye, "n'avait point l'oeil qui voit le mauvais côté des choses,"⁷ is sufficiently optimistic, therefore, to accept the good fortune of a dream as reality. The travellers in the Gueullette stories, however, have come to expect bad fortune and have become too pessimistic to see the happy reversal of this state as anything but a dream.

The motif of the dream-world and the confusion between wakefulness and sleep is repeated in a couple of the internal stories--once in a rather witty way. All the stories told by the travellers have some kind of internal connection, as the people they are seeking usually turn out to be the next arrivals at the palace. Furthermore, the last episode establishes a link with the plot of the frame story, so that the whole presents a rather satisfying unity, despite the disparity of many of the individual episodes. It is the linking of this inner story to the frame story which points in no uncertain terms to the moral of the whole collection--for Gueullette keeps doggedly to his intention of uplifting his readers. It is stressed in the following way: the final group which is brought to the palace consists of a group of players, among whom is a handsome actor with whom Goul-Saba falls in love and resolves to marry. The other sultanas are shocked by such baseness. She is not to be diverted from it, however, even by the reappearance of the supposedly dead Oguz. What so shocks everyone was that she, a princess of royal blood--for she had originally represented herself to Oguz as a princess who had been sold into slavery as the result of unhappy wars--and a former favourite of the mighty sultan of Guzarate, to boot--could

stoop so low. It now transpires that she had made up the story of royal ancestry; her choosing to go off with a common actor is therefore a reinforcement of her worthlessness and an endorsement by Gueullette of the social status quo. We have already seen him in the story of Shems-Eddin, for example, uphold the Establishment by the converse example: the child of a royal mother is brought up by peasants, and his true identity is revealed only after his noble actions have shown his true worth. Gueullette's main moral tenets owe more to the art form of the fairy story than to the folk version, where it is often the hero from genuinely poor circumstances who marries the princess and becomes king, thereby bringing about the wish fulfilment of the folk.

The wish fulfilment we see in this collection is of a more spiritual kind. Mention has already been made of the paradise aspect of the frame story. Paradise is even more vividly evoked in "L'Histoire d'Abderaïm." Abderaïm is transported by the angel to have a glimpse of paradise itself. He describes a banquet which he witnesses:

... ce qui me surprit, c'est qu'après qu'ils paroissent rassasiés, je vis des oiseaux descendre de l'air, dont plusieurs volant sur la tête de ces élus leur disoient: Je suis un oiseau dont les os sont semblables à ceux d'un chameau, qui ai bu de l'eau pure des fontaines de Salsebil et Kiafour, qui ensuite me suis repu des herbes odoriférantes qui croissent dans le paradis. Alors les bienheureux ne paroissent pas plutôt souhaiter de goûter de ces oiseaux, qu'ils tomboient tous rôtis et accommodés sur la table, selon le goût de ceux qui les mangeoient; et ensuite par le plus grand des prodiges, ils ressuscitoient dans le moment et s'envoloient.

L'ange voyant ma surprise: Ne t'étonne pas, dit-il, de ce que tu vois; cet oiseau que l'on a beau manger et dont la chair ne diminue point, est l'image sensible de l'alcoran, dont chacun peut tirer profit, qu'on a beau lire sans qu'on en perde le goût, et sans que la force des paroles en soit énervée. (C.F., XXIII, 433-434)

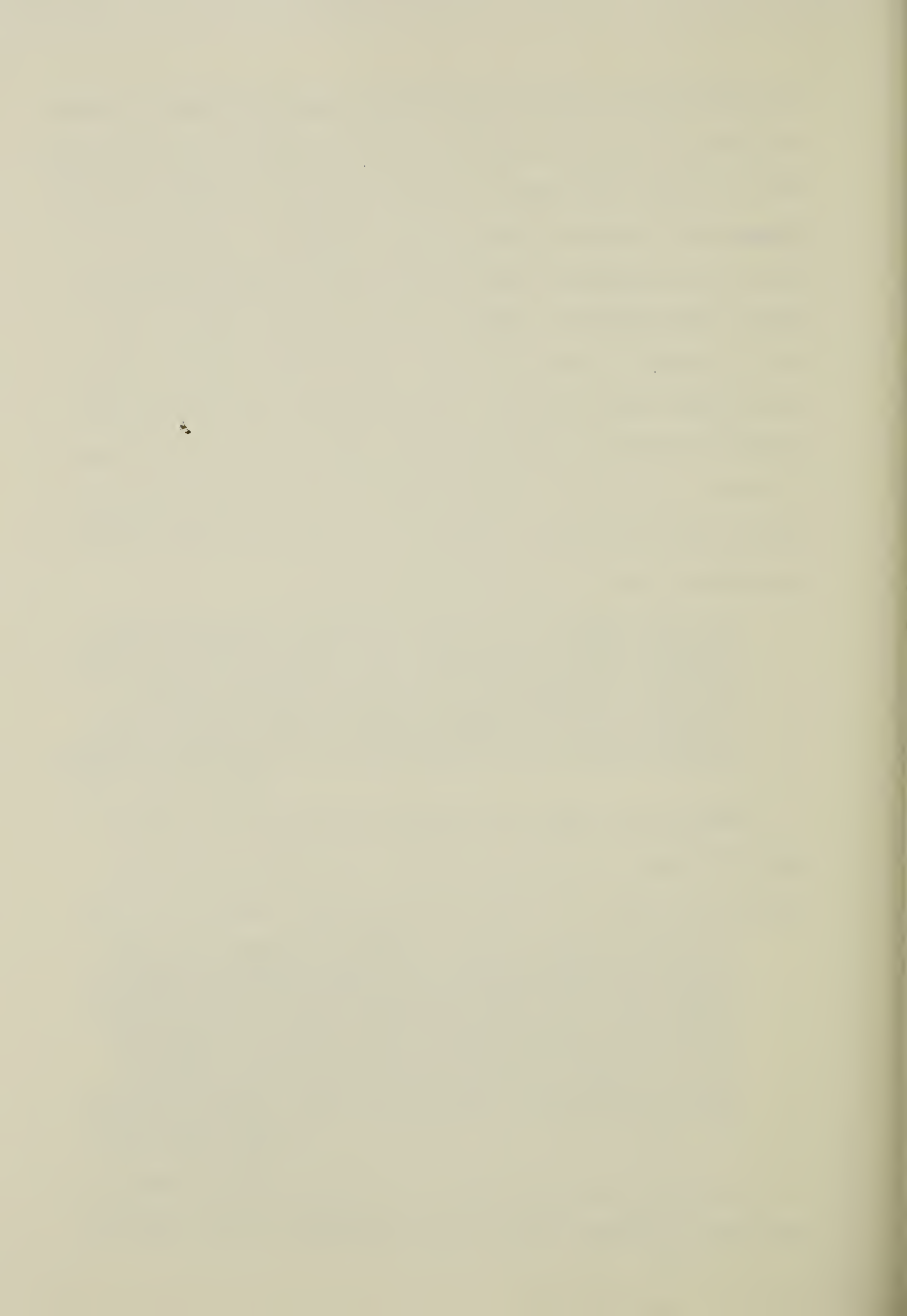
How could one find greater wish-fulfilment than in the idea of eating the bird, yet having the bird fly off in its pristine state afterwards? This is not the only example of such a mixing of a hedonistic pays de Cocagne and a religious paradise in the collection. Added to the mixture is an element of comedy in the story of Katifé and Margeon. Margeon forces Katifé to undergo a series of severe trials before she will consent to become his wife. One of these consists in his not uttering a word for a year. Margeon tries to trick Katifé into speaking by having him transported to a sumptuous room in his sleep; he awakes to the sound of singing birds, to the perfume of exquisite flowers, and to the sight of Margeon, adorned to enhance her already considerable beauty in the guise of a houri:

Mon cher seigneur, me dit-elle, remerciez l'envoyé de dieu, il veut aujourd'hui couronner vos peines et récompenser votre fidélité; vous avez passé sans vous en apercevoir, du sommeil à une mort tranquille, qui vous met au rang des heureux Musulmans. Vous voici dans le lieu de délices que ce saint prophète promet aux fidèles croyans, et par une grâce toute spéciale pour vous, j'ai été choisie pour vous servir de houri.
(C.F., XXIII, 251)

Katifé is not completely convinced by this, and hits upon an ingenious method of finding out whether he is being tricked into speaking by Margeon; his method requires actions rather than words:

Je n'eus pas plutôt conçu ce projet, que Margeon qui avoit d'abord reçu sans résistance de légères caresses de ma part, lisant sans doute dans mes yeux les intentions que j'avois d'éprouver s'il y avoit de la réalité dans ce qui se passoit en ce moment, sauta en bas du lit, en riant de toutes ses forces, et ayant frappé des mains, quatre de ses esclaves qui attendoient ses ordres à la porte, entrèrent dans le lieu ou nous étions: venez à mon secours, leur dit-elle, il n'a tenu qu'à moi d'être la dupe de cette dernière aventure.
(C.F., XXIII, 254)

One cannot help feeling that with this good-humoured emphasis, Gueullette is taking a swipe at the very concrete ideas of paradise



held by the Muslims. If the Song of Solomon can be swept under the carpet because it is meant to be symbolic, or because it is apocryphal, the Koranic descriptions of paradise are unequivocal, and to western ears, smack of earthly rather than heavenly delights. In the seventy-eighth surah, for instance, we find:

Surely for the godfearing awaits a place of security,
 gardens and vineyards
 and maidens with swelling breasts, like of age,
 and a cup overflowing. (trans. Arberry)

and this is precisely the kind of description we are dealing with in Gueullette.

Ostensibly, however, Gueullette again criticizes the enemies of Islam, following the example of Les Mille et une nuits. Although the criticism is made in a somewhat unsubtle way, the story itself is forceful and vivid. Abderaïm is wandering through the world in search of his father. He seeks shelter in the pagoda of a strange town through which he is passing. As he lies in the shadows near the great statue of Ram, two monks emerge from a trapdoor and discuss their plans for the seduction of the most desirable young girl in the neighbourhood, whose piety and severe upbringing would make this feat impossible by normal means. Her family will be told of the honour done to it by Ram's choice of the young girl for his bride. When she is brought to the pagoda, the monk will counterfeit the god and take possession of her. Abderaïm remains hidden until the critical moment before bursting on the scene to the initial terror of Asfer, the young girl, and the great consternation of the monks. He summons Asfer's father to the pagoda:

Je lui montrai le passage pour aller au souterrain, je lui fis connoître l'imposture de ces misérables, et que Ram, au lieu d'être un dieu puissant, comme on le leur faisoit accroire, n'étoit qu'une vaine idole, faite par la main des hommes, et que leur aveuglement portoit ensuite à adorer. (C.F., XXIII, 424)

As a result, the town recognizes Allah as the true god, and idolatry is driven out. Since anything is grist for Gueullette's mill as he searches for new plots, it is not impossible that the idea for this particular incident came from a play which had been put on at the Foire Saint Germain in 1717. The play was La Cendre chaude, and was a one act play in prose by M. Carolet. The relevant part is resumed thus in Parfaict's Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris:

Un ancien Seigneur du Village où la scène se passe, a laissé un fonds pour faire mille écus de dot aux filles de ce lieu, à condition que celles qui l'accepteroient, viendroient offrir sur son tombeau les prémices de leur hyménée. Colette jeune Paysanne est actuellement dans le cas: elle doit le jour même épouser Me. Pierre qu'elle n'aime point. Léandre, amant aimé de Colette, s'enferme dans le tombeau, & lorsque Colette se présente pour remplir la condition requise pour avoir le dot, l'Amant revêtu de l'habillement de la statue du vieux Gentilhomme, se lève, et déclare qu'il accepte volontiers l'offre de la Belle. Colette effrayée d'abord, se rassure en reconnaissant Léandre: il sort avec elle pour obtenir le consentement de ses parents. (Vol. I, pp. 154-155)

If Gueullette had seen this play performed, it would explain the theatrical setting of his story.

A further aspect of Les Mille et une nuits which Gueullette imitates with ease and success in this collection is the mixing of the fantastic and the rational. There is a rather charming example of the former in the dream of the wicked, incestuous Cazan-Can whose desire for his sister Canzadé disappears in a dramatic way overnight. (Again the confusion of dreaming and wakefulness makes it difficult to know what terms to use when speaking of this incident; however it may be, it

occurs during the night.) An old man appears before Cazan-Can who is a prisoner in a hut belonging to some savages:

Alors, ce vieillard vénérable s'approchant de moi, me frappa au coté gauche, d'un couteau tranchant des deux côtés, me l'ouvrit, en tira une petite graine noire grosse comme une groseille, et la jeta dans le feu qui étoit dans ma cabane. (C.F., XXIII, 58)

At this point Cazan-Can cries out with pain and awakens his fellow-prisoner:

... comme j'avois la main appuyée sur mon coeur, il approcha sa lumière, et fut, ainsi que moi, dans la dernière surprise d'y trouver une cicatrice long comme le doigt, et qui paroisoit encore presque sanglante; mais ce qui mit le comble à mon étonnement, c'est qu'après que l'extrême douleur que j'avois ressentie fut passée, l'horrible passion que j'avois eu jusqu'alors pour Canzadé, s'éteignit dans mon coeur, qu'elle y fit place à la tendresse la plus pure.
(C.F., XXIII, 58-59)

Juxtaposed with this kind of magical--not to say romantic--explanation for certain kinds of behaviour are sundry cynical comments of a more realistic nature. They are all uttered with a sort of tongue-in-cheek good humour on the part of Gueullette who has been more restrained in this area hitherto. The first of the travellers to relate her story--Karabag--exclaims at one point: "Avec de l'argent, de quoi ne vient-on pas à bout!" (C.F., XXII, 301). Aboul-Assam, the blind man of Chitor, comments after the death of his faithful wife: "Je compris en ce moment qu'il est aisé de se consoler de la mort d'une laide femme, et que l'on n'aime pas." After he has become a calender, a Persian charlatan counsels him thus:

Que voulez-vous, me dit-il en riant, il faut autant que l'on peut se tirer d'intrigue aux dépens des sots; c'est votre état ainsi que le mien; vous ne vivez que de grimaces, et moi de tours d'adresse. J'ai été calender comme vous, j'ai trouvé cette vie trop unie et trop insipide, je l'ai quittée pour embrasser celle que je mène, elle est bien plus

variée; on ne nous regarde qu'avec admiration, nous sommes bien reçus par-tout, et avec toutes les ressources que nous avons, nous ne craignons jamais de mourir de faim. Je crois même que pour devenir un habile calender, il est nécessaire d'avoir fait quelques années d'apprentissage dans des troupes pareilles à la nôtre, et je ne désespère pas, quand je serai parvenu à un certain âge, de reprendre un habit que je n'ai abandonné que pour quelque tems. (C.F., XXIII, 13)

In "L'Histoire de Katifé et Margeon," Katifé at one point meets an old friend. As they walk along, they happen to pass a cemetery.

Je suis médecin, poursuivit-il, et si vous m'avez vu il n'y a qu'un moment me cacher le visage en passant devant ce lieu de mauvais augure, c'est que comme il y a ici beaucoup de morts de ma façon, je crains toujours que quelqu'un d'eux ne me prenne au collet pour se venger de mon ignorance; c'est la raison pour laquelle j'évite souvent de prendre ce chemin, ou quand je suis obligé d'y passer, que j'en agis ainsi que vous m'avez vu faire, afin de n'être pas reconnu de ces messieurs. (C.F., XXIII, 202)

In these sentiments Gueullette is expressing the commonplaces of folk knowledge which are a far cry from the elevated manners of the court and its courtiers of whom he usually treats. At the same time this expression of paradoxically open roguery is something we recognize in other eighteenth-century writers, who may or may not have a moralizing purpose in mind. Gil Blas often confesses to having indulged in it, and it has its fullest expression in Le Neveu de Rameau. Gueullette's characters have none of the bitter forcefulness of Rameau's nephew, but they certainly have some relationship with the picaresque world of Lesage.

In "Les Sultanes de Guzarate" we have a much better-rounded view of women than in the previously discussed collection. The sultanas themselves turn out to be the rather passive creatures we have come to expect from the harem, but there is spirit and fire in some of the other women. In the story of Zem Alzaman, Prince of

Kasgar, and Zendheroud, Princess of Samarcand, we find Zendheroud, who, as an only child is heir to the throne, and who has therefore been brought up more like a prince than a princess, disguising herself as her champion Edris, who has mysteriously disappeared, in order to fight in single combat against Zem Alzaman, whom she believes to be her worst enemy (though in fact it is he who has been staying at her court disguised as Edris, and with whom she has fallen in love). When the single combat is set up, it poses the singular problem of Zem Alzaman's having to fight against himself. Zem Alzaman, who does not, of course, know the identity of his opponent, is astonished at his/her ferocity; she acquits herself well, therefore. Margeon, on a different social level, is also emancipated, as we find out from her assertion:

... pour moi, élevée avec des sentiments au-dessus des personnes de mon sexe, et aujourd'hui maîtresse absolue de mon sort, je ne me livrerai jamais à un homme, pour être mon époux, que je ne le connoisse à fond. (C.F., XXIII, 215)

Gueullette's oriental tales have been characterized by literary historians as endless imitations of the original without any life of their own. This seems to be particularly untrue of "Les Sultanes de Guzarate." The great attraction of Les Mille et une nuits is first that it holds our curiosity so that we read on to find out by what ingenious twist any given tale will be resolved, and second that we are fascinated by the panorama of life at all levels that the tales reveal. Voltaire himself confessed in his later years that they were his almost exclusive reading, which is powerful commendation, if their popularity had needed any. But in his last collection, Gueullette offers us great ingenuity of plot, and a wide range of experiences,

as has already been shown. For us the excitement of reading him is dampened because we know that the material comes from secondary sources, but the many reprintings his stories received show that his contemporaries were more indulgent than we are, and accepted these imitations without quibbling. Merely reading the stories was not sufficient to satisfy these audiences--they were eager to sample the tales in other guises. We learn that one M. Boissy set one of the stories of this collection to music, and made it into the opera Margeon et Katifé, ou le muet par amour. The comment on this comic opera, however, is: "Il s'en faut bien qu'elle ait fait autant de plaisir au Théâtre que dans le Roman." Gueullette, then, can take a place in the wings of the literature of his century as being a well-known purveyor of pleasure in the popular style.

CHAPTER IV

MONCRIF

We turn from Gueullette to Moncrif, to examine the same subject under a very different light. The light is that which shines on different kinds of society and which causes a slight turning in different directions, and each of the authors shone in the way he wished. Gueullette, in his modest way, wrote fluently and because he imitated Galland so successfully, appealed to a wide spectrum of the public which had already been delighted by Galland. As we have seen, Gueullette was happy to indulge contemporary taste for parodies in his parades, but these were ephemeral creations, meant for a performance or two and then forgotten; when he writes, with a consciousness of the permanence of the written word, he is much more circumspect, and finds his wide audience through a middle-of-the-road approach.

Moncrif, on the other hand, dwells in a far more courtly circle, and, because of his more idiosyncratic style, appealed to a narrower readership, but--and for Moncrif it is an all-important "but"--the circle was the magic one of people who wielded influence where Moncrif wished it to be wielded, and Moncrif's energies--social and intellectual as well as literary--were entirely devoted

to the end of ingratiating himself with such people. What we find in his stories, therefore, is, naturally, the customary use of an oriental theme--this being the "Open Sesame!" to any kind of success in the genre--along with the expression of a rather impish wit, to which he could afford to give rein, as his circle was rather intimate and would be appreciative of it. In addition, because Moncrif was not as concerned with the slavish imitation of Galland to which Gueullette was devoted, but was more concerned with personal adaptation of them, his tales have a more characteristic stamp. (To say this is perhaps unfair to Gueullette as the latter's stories are infinitely more numerous than Moncrif's, but we can look at Moncrif as a kind of cameo exponent of the form, and one who had significance among his contemporaries.)

His success, in fact, is grossly disproportionate to his achievement, but it is a striking testimony of his adroitness in fulfilling his avowed intent which was to please. In 1733 he was elected to the Académie Française when his total literary output up to that point consisted of Les Aventures de Zéloïde et d'Amanzarifdine, a so-called conte indien, which, as it appears in Le Cabinet des fées, we shall be looking at shortly; a comedy in one act entitled Les Abdérites and a slight treatise entitled Histoire des chats, which was to provide Moncrif's detractors with an endless source of weaponry in the form of puns which they perpetrated for the rest of his life. There appeared some time after its publication a work called Histoire d'un rat calobris à Citron Barbet au sujet de l'histoire des chats, par M. Mongrif, published at Ratopolis, and when

Moncrif was given an official title, was referred to him as Historiographe de la Reine. Election to the Académie was unanimous but caused more than a raised eyebrow in some quarters. One contemporary ditty ran thus:

Les beaux esprits vont nous apprendre
 Qui chez eux doit avoir le pas;
 Ils ont des rats, ils ont des rats;
 Il leur faut quelqu'un pour les prendre;
 Ils choisiront l'auteur des Chats.
 Si vous ne choisissiez Moncrif,
 Clermont vous montrera la grif;
 Mais quand Moncrif sera reçu
 Apolon montrera le cu....¹

Pleasing people was a pastime forced on him through necessity, as he was thoroughly impoverished and needed the favour of the rich in order to remain in their circles. As he himself said, "Un des fruits qu'on doit naturellement se promettre des avantages de l'esprit, c'est de se procurer une vie agréable."²

It was probably not immensely subtle of him to publish the secrets of the art he practised with such success, but there is quite a lot of good sense in his ideas about bringing up children. As his distinguished modern clansman, C.K. Scott Moncrieff, says,

So far from anticipating the 18th century theory of man's fundamental goodness, he seems inclined to base rather upon the rival theory which influenced the upbringing of children in Scotland in quite recent times. And some of his suggestions suggest the very latest devices for broadening public school education in England.³

Moncrif presents a fairly rounded programme of study which reminds one of the mens sana in corpore sano idea of the English public school, which emphasizes development of mind and body. He sums up thus his general idea of what an education should be:

Poser le fondement des vertus dans l'ame des enfants, et leur présenter en même temps ces vertus par ce qu'elles ont de sociable, voilà quel doit être le premier objet de leur éducation; soit qu'on cherche à former leur caractère, soit qu'on cultive leur esprit, si l'estime des hommes est un succès louable, qu'il faut leur faire envisager, le bonheur attaché à leur plaisir, doit former le second point de vue.⁴

Whatever one may think of Moncrif's theory, his practice was certainly a great success. He had no doubt been schooled by his mother, a penniless but genteel widow. She had made herself the secrétaire gallante of the ladies of the court. This was an unofficial position with no salary attached, of course, and Scott Moncrieff thinks of her thus:

We may imagine her, a female Figaro, flitting from hôtel to hôtel always primed with the latest scandals, always ready to lend a skilled hand in the concoction of innocent intrigues, and always nourishing in her heart the thought of her handsome son and his career.⁵

So well did this rather obscure woman inculcate into her son the art of pleasing the great that he was given the upbringing accorded to them. He excelled at fencing, and became known as a versifier, so it was in the capacity of secretary that he was taken to London as secretary to the duc d'Aumont. After the recall of the latter to Paris, Moncrif became secretary to the comte d'Argenson who was Lieutenant de Police, and through him entered the salon of Mme de Bouillon at the Petit-Luxembourg. There he became attached to the comte-abbé de Clermont, grandson of Louis XIV and Mme de Montespan, and at the time a young man eager to be exposed to all the worldly pleasures known to his mentor, Moncrif. For some reason he fell from favour at the Petit-Luxembourg, but soon, thanks to the intervention

of the duchesse de Luynes, was appointed Historiographe de la Reine. We know from the meticulous Mémoires of the staid duc de Luynes that the little court of Marie Leczinska was a place of modest pleasures; but Moncrif had leisure to pursue his more worldly interests and was regularly seen at the Opéra and other places of entertainment, and was known to have agreeable female companionship. This life obviously agreed with him as he enjoyed it until 1770, when his epitaph, written by La Place, runs:

Réalisant les mœurs de l'âge d'or,
Ami sûr, auteur agréable,
Ci-gît qui, vieux comme Nestor,
Fut moins bavard et plus aimable.⁶

Moncrif had been noted by other literary figures--not always for purposes of mockery. Voltaire had known him for a while, and addressed him thus:

Muse amable, muse badine,
Esprit juste et non moins galant,
Vous ressemblez bien mieux à Lafare, à Ferran
Que je ne ressemble à Racine.⁷

(This may be taken as a compliment of some sort.) Moncrif acted in Voltaire's play Brutus at some point, so there were ties between the two, but the acquaintance seems not to have been pursued. D'Alembert included him in his Histoire des membres de l'Académie Française morts depuis 1700 jusqu'à 1771.

As for Moncrif's contribution to the development of the fairy story in the eighteenth century, we find him in the forefront of those riding the band-wagon of Les Mille et une nuits, as Les Aventures de Zeloïde et d'Amanzarifdine was first published as early as 1714, and he obviously remained intrigued with the form, for in 1738,

tacked on to his Essai sur la nécessité et les moyens de plaire are the six stories which are reprinted in volume XXIII of Le Cabinet des fées. There is an enormous difference between the stories written at different times, and they illustrate different aspects of the genre.

Les Aventures de Zeloïde et d'Amanzarifdine is a most chaotic tale, which has a slightly ribald charm that one imagines must have characterized its author. It also uses many of the elements of the standard fairy tale which show that Moncrif must have read Perrault. Amanzarifdine is a prince who is cast ashore on a city in mourning because the young princess, Zeloïde, has just been snatched away by two birds. This misfortune is due to the happenings at her christening years ago. Her guardian spirits were two fairies and one genie. During the preliminaries to the gift giving the two fairies summoned, one the ladies and the other the gentlemen of the court, to grant them their hearts' desire. The second of the two fairies is old and ugly but coquettish, and is piqued when none of the gentlemen mentions her as his dearest wish. The genie is simply unpleasant; his gift to the baby Zeloïde is to say that she will never marry until she has granted one thousand and one favours to her spouse-to-be, otherwise the instant of her marriage will be the last of her life. The ugly fairy endows her with all the advantages of mind, but all the wishes she makes before the age of sixteen will be disastrous for her later on in life. The best the second fairy can wish is that Zeloïde should have a calm and tranquil nature, and that anything she might be tempted to wish for before the age of eighteen should turn ugly.

Amanzarifdine goes off to search for the princess; he meets diverse people who, like him, have a complicated series of titillating encounters, some of which are used to make a social comment in a very non-didactic way. Early in his wanderings, Amanzarifdine enters a pavilion full of beautiful ladies whose attentions he resists. In the next pavilion, however, is a woman he takes to be Zeloïde, and he succumbs to her overtures; upon discovering that she is not Zeloïde, he is blinded and transported to a city where he hears an oracle declare that he is in a place of punishment for those who have tasted the pleasures of love without bearing its chains. When he finally finds Zeloïde, he refuses to respond to her advances because he knows of her destiny. She hastens away from him and immediately falls into the clutches of a young and an old genie and is told she must choose one of them. She chooses the older and is seized by him. She screams and we expect the worst, but it turns out that he merely requires her to listen to his story. All he asked for in life was a sincere woman. He therefore took a woman from Germany, from Greece, from Italy, from England, from America and from France and to see which would be sincere; he told each that if she whispered her secret desire into a magic urn, her wishes would be granted. Naturally, he listened at the urn and discovered that none told him to his face what she had whispered in the urn with the patriotic exception of Clarice, the French woman. She, however, was so sincere that she did not flinch to tell him when she loved another.

The next episode of his adventures is a further indictment of womankind. The young genie finds himself with his shipwrecked

companions on an island ruled by women. The genie attracts the queen, perversely, by pretending to take no notice of her. He persuades her to release himself and his companions from the bondage of slavery, and they all live happily for a while. Soon, however, the queen tires of his excessive fidelity and he leaves the island, disillusioned.

In the last episode he recounts, however, it is he himself who victimizes the young beauty he has taken as his wife for what he considers her excessive fidelity. His lovely wife, Zelmaïde, is on the verge of dying of grief at such treatment, and in self-recrimination he turns himself into a wretched old man. She begs him to do the same to her, and because of this proof of extraordinary love, he now forces every woman he meets to listen to his story.

The conclusion of the story is the resolution of the Zeloïde-Amanzarifdine situation. Contrary to any of our lascivious imaginings, an oracle declares that the best way for Zeloïde to give her favours is to show proof of her fidelity. This, of course, she does; on Amanzarifdine's side, he fulfils his destiny of finding satisfaction in rationally inspired love, because Zeloïde conducts herself perfectly and is worthy of his love.

The story has the obvious, immediately recognizable signs of an oriental tale. The "A" and "Z" initials of the hero's and heroine's names are an obvious quasi-oriental touch; then there are voyages in the Arabian sea, genies, Circassian slaves, and many of the other trappings of the genre. To this Moncrif adds his own touches of irreverence and charm. The final moral of the tale, if moral one is looking for, is that man's grief and woe is caused by woman's infidelity and his joy and bliss by her fidelity.

If the moral in this particular story is of a take-it-or-leave-it variety, it is more surely emphasized in the tales which accompany-- somewhat gratuitously, despite the author's insistence on their relevance--the Essai sur la nécessité et sur les moyens de plaire which was published in 1737. In the "Avertissement" Moncrif declared himself to have the following aim:

Les Contes des Fées qu'on va trouver à la suite de cet ouvrage, seroient sans doute déplacés, s'ils ne faisoient partie de l'Ouvrage même; mais on reconnoîtra que les idées, les événemens qui constituent chaque conte, servent à prouver l'utilité de quelques-uns des principes répandus dans ces Essais. Mon objet a été d'embrasser une sorte de Roman dont toute l'action tendit à établir une ou plusieurs vérités morales. J'ai cru que le merveilleux de la féerie 8 concourroit à mettre ces maximes dans un jour plus agréable.

Each of the little stories we find in volume XXV of the Cabinet des fées illustrates a moral point about human frailty: "Les Dons des fées" teaches the power of love over that of fear; "L'Isle de la liberté" has as its main point that: "Il n'y a point de société qui pût s'entretenir, si les hommes se montrent tels qu'ils sont" and so on. Perhaps the most interesting, though the most convoluted, is the last, "Les Ames rivales." The moral is difficult to discern, though presumably simply illustrates the victory of good over evil. What is interesting about it, however, is that it involves an account of a kind of transmigration of souls. A princess, Amassita, has to choose which of twelve suitors she is to marry. Two of them know the secret of the mandiran, which is a prayer which can separate the soul from the body. The villain Sikander finds the means whereby he can take possession of the body of the hero Muzalhim, while leaving the soul of the latter wandering without a body to attach itself to. Finally,

however, Mazalhim recovers possession of his body and he and Amassita are joined in matrimony. "On trouve gravé dans les fastes de Malléani: Amassita et Mazulhim ... s'aimèrent comme s'ils avoient été assez heureux pour n'avoir que leur ame" (C.F., XXIV, 557).

The story reflects a contemporary interest in oriental thought and belief, which echoes Montesquieu at some distance. Moncrif is a perfectly characteristic exponent of the purely escapist and also of the moralising kind of story.

Moncrif, as we have just seen, brings an element of wit into the genre of the fairy stories of the oriental kind which was lacking almost totally in Gueullette and Mlle de Lussan. We come now to four writers--Hamilton, Caylus, Duclos and, surprisingly, J.-J. Rousseau--at whose stories we will now look, who are not only witty exponents of the genre, but who parody it, thus creating a new development in its modest history. Hamilton's parody is elegant and literary, as befits a somewhat isolated man attached to the exiled court of King James of England and a favourite in the salons of the duchesse du Maine at Sceaux; the remaining three kept court at the table of the actress Mlle Quinault where the badinerie was less stylized and more acerbic. Their parodies contain some social comment and tend to get their inspiration from a European style of fairy story, rather than the oriental style which Hamilton relies upon heavily.

CHAPTER V

MADemoisELLE DE LUSSAN

The success story of Gueullette will have sufficed to show that the dominant trend in the fairy story in the early part of the XVIIIth century was the cult of the Orient; we have seen that when Moncrif wanted to please, he also used this theme. We shall see that it is the main butt of the satire which is to follow as the dominant theme later in the century. Although it is by far the most considerable source of stories and imitations, it is not the only one. Also grist for the satirists' mill were stories of a romantic, though somewhat didactic nature, set in any kind of vaguely exotic surroundings. As the satires are, for the most part, witty and readable, it is not unreasonable to look at the objects of their satirizing. As is so often the case with successful satire, the object has sunk almost without trace, while the satire on it has survived--albeit a relative survival in this case. Let us dig for a moment among these stories to find out something about the grass roots, as it were, of the form.

It is represented in Le Cabinet des fées by three ladies who span the first half of the century. Mme de Lintot and Mlle de Lubert's contribution is very slim and their place in literary history worthy of only a footnote; Mlle de Lussan, however, is undeservedly neglected

and it is her stories we shall consider, along with a brief consideration of their relation to her other writing.

It is pointless to pretend that we are dealing with a lofty work; we are certainly not; the Mercure de France recognizes the qualitative difference between the various kinds of literary output of Mlle de Lussan, and "Les Veillées de Thessalie," which is the title of the stories in Le Cabinet des fées, is obviously not considered her most prestigious work. We can learn this from the following extract from Le Mercure when it discusses the publication of l'Histoire Anécdotique de la cour de Philippe Auguste:

Que Mademoiselle de Lussan rende, comme elle a fait dans la vie de Madame de Gondés, la fidelle image du commerce des honnêtes gens d'aujourd'hui, et cela sur le ton de la bonne compagnie, c'est ce qu'on pouvoit attendre de son esprit et d'un long usage du monde. Que pour divertir celle des autres, elle lui ait donné carrière dans ses Veillées de Thessalie, pour instruire les jeunes personnes en les amusant; c'est un utile et élégant badinage, digne d'occuper ses loisirs; mais un Ouvrage de la force de celui dont il s'agit icy, monte sur le vrai ton héroïque, et sur celui de la Cour, soutenu par un langage digne de la noblesse des sentimens qui y règne, il faut dans elle un grand courage pour l'avoir entrepris, il faut qu'elle soit bien supérieure à son sexe pour l'avoir conduit et exécuté comme elle l'a fait.¹

(The condescending tone of Le Mercure towards women requires a word here. It is not at all atypical of the journal, which especially in its earlier days, filled its pages with chatty articles about fashions, with various pieces of gallantry dedicated to various women, and their coy replies to them. Although the tone is unpleasant, it must be confessed that it was fully deserved, and the intellectual level of the female readership of Le Mercure cannot have been generally high. The article quoted above can certainly not be taken to task for its

comments about "Les Veillées de Thessalie"; what they are, indeed, is precisely a slight divertissement with a certain moral import.)

It is interesting to show that, despite the discrepancies between the basic form of the works, the social settings and the relative complexities, the moral lesson of "Les Veillées de Thessalie" is exactly the same as that of L'Histoire de la Comtesse de Gondez, which is mentioned only briefly in the article, and in such terms as to make it sound inferior to L'Histoire anecdotique de la cour de Philippe Auguste. This is in no way true; the first novel is undeservedly obscure, as it has elements in it which make it a worthy precursor of La Vie de Marianne, for example, and which also, even at this early date, contains slight intimations of Les Liaisons dangereuses. One can see a continuing preoccupation on the part of the author in all her works with the discrepancy between appearance and reality--that obsession of the century--and, above all, with the idea of the importance of conformity to the established social order, usually represented by an authoritarian parent. These themes are developed with insight and sensitivity in the novel; if Mlle de Lussan chooses to pare down the psychological complexities in order to write rather simplistic fairy stories, it is not because she is bankrupt of other ideas. She is clearly responding to a demand for the kind of story read by the kind of people who read Le Mercure de France, and who, as they belonged to the beau monde, represented quite a large proportion of the reading public of the time. We will look first of all at the novel, therefore, in order to make a comparison between the ways of expressing a similar moral

position. Most of the authors who appear in Le Cabinet des fées are now known--if at all--uniquely for their contes; Mlle de Lussan shows more versatility than her fellow writers in that she ranges easily from the novel to the folk-tale to the historic novel.

L'Histoire de la comtesse de Gondez is a lively, interestingly told, mémoire-type novel set in eighteenth-century Paris. Its chief fault lies in the rather abrupt changes in some of the characters for which the reader has no forewarning; this, however, stems from the fact that Mlle de Lussan's main theme is the discrepancy between appearance and reality, which it is hard to indicate without this abruptness.

The plot of the novel goes thus: the story-teller starts her narrative when she is a young girl fresh out of the convent. Confused as to the decision she should make about her several attractive suitors, she asks the advice of an old friend of her father's, rather than risking the displeasure of her father himself, fearing that he might take amiss even the best-justified qualms on her part. She is somewhat surprised when the friend himself asks for her hand, but she dutifully accepts and becomes the comtesse de Gondez. She is devoted to her husband, whom she respects greatly, but both her best friend's brother, the chevalier de Fanime, and her husband's nephew, M. de Distenteuil, wish her devotion to be less single-minded. Her husband dies after a very few years of marriage, and on his death-bed he begs his father-in-law, M. de Brionsel, to try to bring it about that his widow shall marry his nephew, who now inherits the title. The countess, however, realising the new social position that widowhood

bestows upon her, resolves to follow her inclinations this time, even at the risk of displeasing her father, and responds to the advances of the chevalier de Fanime.

This latter is set upon by bandits and his life is saved by M. de Distenteuil who happens to be passing by. The comtesse visits him daily through his convalescence and all looks as if it is going well. Unfortunately, however, the chevalier's sister, the comtesse de Venneville, confesses to her friend that she is in love with M. de Distenteuil, and upon discovering where his inclination lies tells him and M. de Brionsel malicious untruths about the comtesse de Gondez. They quickly realise the true situation, but the rupture which follows this incident makes it difficult for Mme de Gondez to see the chevalier. She tells her father of her desire to marry him, and he agrees on condition that she spend a year of trial without seeing him. She therefore retires with her family to one of their estates in the Loire and M. de Distenteuil goes gloomily to his in Brittany. A neighbour of the heroine's mentions her acquaintance with the chevalier de Fanime, and gradually reveals that his character is not at all as it has been presented hitherto; confirmation of this comes by way of news of a scandal which breaks around him in Paris. The family returns unhappily to the capital where Mme de Gondez falls direly ill. M. de Distenteuil rushes to her bedside as soon as he hears the news, and is there in time to witness the heroine's recovery. They all return to Mondelis on the Loire for the convalescence, and there Mme de Gondez realizes the true worth of the young count, and finally, after many setbacks, the two are united.

There is considerable psychological complexity in the character of Mme de Gondez. She has a very nice sense of the implication of her widowhood for her relationship with her father, but is also partly aware that her actions at this point are dictated by defiance rather than mere inclination. After the chevalier's accident and the assiduousness of M. de Distenteuil, she finds herself wishing that the chevalier's character were as fine as his. After the revelation of the chevalier's scandalous behaviour, Mme de Gondez is distressed to meet him out walking one day. She copes efficiently and even amusingly with the situation by pretending that one of the results of her illness is partial amnesia, and claims not to recognize him. On another occasion she mentions her literary preferences, and is, presumably, voicing the opinions of her creator:

Oh! Monsieur ... je n'ai point l'esprit gâté par la lecture des Romans, je les hais à la mort, surtout ceux qui visent au merveilleux; j'aime la lecture, mais c'est celle qui instruit. Les aventures d'un particulier, narrées avec simplicité et vérité me plaisent toujours infiniment mieux que celles des Cyrus et des Artabans dont de bonne-foi je ne sçai que les noms; la lecture d'un seul tome de ces Livres, qui ne finissent point, m'a dégoûté pour toujours de ce genre d'ouvrages.²

Here we see once again the ostensible reason for enjoying reading given throughout this period: moral elevation is the thing to look for.

Mme de Gondez's friend, the comtesse de Venneville, together with her brother, is the person who most completely represents the unreliable nature of appearances, and it is the complexity of her apparent virtue which makes her interesting. Before the act of treachery which brands her as a person of complete unscrupulousness,

and therefore banishes her from the circle of acquaintances of the narrator, she already shows herself to have a far more cynical cast of character than her friend:

Il n'y a presque jamais assez de sympathie entre deux personnes qui s'unissent par un noeud que la mort seule peut rompre, pour oser espérer qu'ils puissent, même avec beaucoup de raison, se rendre parfaitement heureux. Le devoir, qui exige une tendresse réciproque, le détruit, ou l'empêche de naître. Nous avons tous, dans le coeur et dans l'esprit, un certain genre de libertinage, qui souvent même n'est pas aperçu de nous, et que la contrainte développe et irrite. Je suis dans le cas ... je n'ai presque envie de rien lorsque tout m'est permis; mais j'aurois envie de bien des choses, si tout m'étoit défendu.³

We shall see that such sentiments could not be farther removed from those of the simple heroines of "Les Veillées de Thessalie."

The opposition of good and evil in the novel is presented in terms that are all too human. The scenes in which most of the novel takes place are rather charmingly feminine, but protected by a strong code of morals. We have the very distinct impression of a different setting just beyond the periphery of this little world, the very frail barriers of which are the deceptive charm exerted by the deceitful characters who move from one to the other. We get the first indication of this threatening world when Mme de Gondez picks up a letter dropped by the chevalier de Fanime, and finds that it is from a woman whom she assumes he has ceased to associate with:

Deplemont vient de m'apprendre, que vous vouliez vous réconcilier avec moi. Vous ne sçauriez mieux perdre votre tems; car je suis malade à garder le lit, et je prétens mériter ma guérison du Seigneur, en pardonnant à mes ennemis. Profitez du mouvement qui me porte à la pénitence.⁴

This flippancy of tone, allied with the intensity of desire, is not unworthy of a Mme de Merteuil.

In the end, however, the wicked are punished--in this case the chevalier goes to Malta and dies there--and the good are rewarded with a happy union and lasting affection; in the accomplishment of this, the status quo is upheld in an exemplary way. Those who abide by the rules of society and follow the advice of their elders in that society achieve happiness in it. The continuance of the established order is underlined by the fact that when Mme de Gondez marries for the second time, she does not even change her name, and she continues to enjoy all the appurtenances of good life brought by her first marriage.

This is the same message that Mlle de Lussan brings to the fairy stories, which is quite at variance with folk fairy tales. These latter show that it suffices to be brave and intelligent, and if one exercises one's capacities to the utmost, one will achieve one's heart's desire; the point of these art fairy stories however, is to underline the fact that the social order as it is seen by those who stand high in it is the best of all possible worlds, and the forces of good, whether natural or supernatural, will always be on one's side if one was born in the right circumstances.

The setting for "Les Veillées de Thessalie" is, as their title suggests, that of an area of Greece at some indeterminate time in the past. The society is one of relatively simple shepherds, so the status quo here has rather different terms of reference from that of the Parisian society we have just discussed. The setting of the

Vale of Tempe is also somewhat of a change from both the exotic oriental landscapes of the Gueullette-type stories, and also from the fairy-tale scenes with thick forests or dark caves or dazzling treasure hoards that we come across in the more conventional fairy tales. In fact, the local colour is very limited, and apart from the mention of a few well-known names like Mount Olympus and Larissa the stories could be set in any rural community. Simplicity and virtue are the hallmarks of the characters, and their lives are largely a bucolic idyll:

Dans la belle vallée de Tempé, si célèbre chez les anciens, étoit un hameau, situé sur le bord du fleuve Penée. Tous ses habitans étoient heureux: leur industrie, leur amour pour le travail et la fertilité du terrain faisoient leur fortune. (C.F., XXVI, 217)

The women who assemble every evening are "unies par le sang, et plus encore par le désir d'être toujours utiles à la patrie" (C.F. XXVI, 217). The tenor of the evening reunions is one of extreme virtue:

Avant de se mettre à l'ouvrage, on chantoit une hymne à la louange des dieux, ensuite on faisoit une collation simple, avec des fruits secs, et des petits gâteaux faits avec un millet exquis, dont cette terre abonde.
(C.F., XXVI, 217)

The device for the telling of the stories is the fact that things were not always so in the community, and that in previous times there were evil forces at work which threatened to destroy its peace. In every example of this--and there is one in each of the first six "Veillées"--there is a struggle between theologically oriented forces of good and evil, with the representative of evil power having sold his soul to the devil, in some sense.

As there are many similarities among the stories, it will suffice to look at one of them only in order to get some idea of

their pattern. Each of the elderly ladies of the hamlet tells a story from her early life as a lesson to the young girls present. As one of the ladies puts it:

Tout devient instruction, mes enfans ... il s'agit d'en faire un bon usage: le merveilleux pique la curiosité; ce n'est pas cependant pour satisfaire la vôtre que je vais vous réciter des aventures extraordinaires et intéressantes; c'est principalement pour vous inspirer ce courage que la vertu donne, et dont elle a besoin pour se soutenir dans de grands revers; pour vous convaincre enfin qu'il faut se confier en la protection des immortels. Un coeur pur peut et doit toujours y compter.
(C.F., XXVI, 371-372)

This, then, is a link in the chain which stretches in Le Cabinet des fées from Perrault to Mme Le Prince de Beaumont, whom we shall be looking at later; in all three cases, the author has young people in mind, in contrast to the majority of authors, and tries to provide them with moral examples.

The essential plot in each of the first six "Veillées" is that of two young people who are in love, but there is some obstacle to their marriage--a rival suitor, parental opposition, or something else. The obstacle turns out to be an instrument of the forces of evil; good triumphs, and the couple, who were obviously destined for each other, are united in the end. In the third "Veillée," which can serve as our example, the couple in question are the offspring, Sidonie and Menocrate, of two sisters who are married to two good friends; the obstacle to their happiness is the fact that, during their adolescence, their uncle, who was very rich, died, and left his entire fortune to Sidonie's brother. Menocrate's family, enraged at what it took to be a gross injustice, swears that the marriage which had been arranged at the birth of the children would never take place.

The force of evil in the tale is represented by another young girl from the village called Steviane who is in love with Menocrate and is determined to get him, despite the fact that she is, in turn, loved by another young shepherd, the virtuous and studious Thevalès. As she is a sorceress, she is able to whisk Sidonie away from the village while she herself takes on her form. Immediately, there is a disastrous storm in which Sidonie's brother is found dead and Menocrate's father's flocks and goods are destroyed. The show of generosity on the part of Sidonie's father that this brings about leads to a reconciliation between the two families so that the marriage is arranged between Menocrate and the false Sidonie. The true Sidonie, after wandering about in a strange country, comes across an old man who tells her that she has been transported to Egypt and that he is a sage called Cephalis. His dearest pupil and the one who has learned best the mysteries of Zoroastrianism is Thevalès, who, having spent several years at the feet of the master, now returns once a year to spend twenty-four hours with him. The day of the annual visit is, of course, the morrow of Sidonie's arrival. A rushing cloud appears (this is Mlle de Lussan's favourite device for transporting her characters by magic powers) and Thevalès steps out of it to be severely chastised by his old master for allowing himself to be captivated by someone as wicked as Steviane. He sees, with horror, the error of his ways and undertakes to accompany Sidonie back home and put her affairs to rights. Sidonie is made invisible, and has to suffer watching preparations for the wedding. Revelation is delayed until the last possible moment, and she appears at the altar just as the

couple are about to be wed. Steviane kills herself with the knife used for sacrifices and the ceremony goes on as originally planned.

The force of the moral of this story is somewhat obscured, because it is not easy to see wherein lies the particular virtue of the heroine. In one of the "Veillées," it obviously lies in the hero's refusing to give himself up to the powers of evil to which the girl who has been trying to seduce him has given herself over; in this case, however, and in several others, the heroine's goodness is indicated by a passive trust that all will be well. The division of characters into nebulously good and positively bad strips them of the interest we observed in the wicked characters in L'Histoire de Madame de Gondez. There is also not much possibility of moral dilemma because the evil person actually takes over the identity of her rival so there is no opportunity to develop any interesting division of loyalty or anything of that sort. Similarly, when the wickedness is revealed, it is so absolute that only one kind of reaction is possible--namely that of Thevalès when he realizes Steviane's mendacity:

La perfide! s'écria avec transport Thevalès. Ses forfaits me font trembler; ne les ayant pas soupçonnés, je n'ai pu les prévenir, mais je l'en punirai; c'en est fait, mon amour effrayé de tant de crimes, se change en horreur. (C.F., XXVI, 422)

The setting for these stories, therefore, though potentially interesting, serves as a constriction for Mlle de Lussan's imagination in these "Veillées de Thessalie"; the struggle between good and evil in each case comes about in too pat and too unmotivated a way to make it much more than the exercise Le Mercure de France suggested it was.

The pervading element in the stories is their essential gentility, and one is conscious of a very traditionally feminine atmosphere in them--a general softness of the outlines, and a firm, though obscurely placed belief that everything will come out all right in the end. The method of recounting, as we have seen, is one of consistent and rather sickening piety; inevitably, given the popularity of the form of the stories, reaction came. It came from the witty and urbane men who gathered around the actress Mlle Quinault and who, together, commanded a great range of social, artistic and intellectual achievement, but it came first from a Scotsman, exiled in France, who brought a healthy whiff of his native air into this backwater of French letters.

CHAPTER VI

HAMILTON

If Mademoiselle de Lussan is our best example of the straight-faced, straight-laced exponent of the exotically-inspired, morally uplifting fairy story, then we could not do better than to look to Antoine Hamilton for an introduction to the more sophisticated world of the satire of such things. The fact that Hamilton was not French, although raised in France, and not of any French literary convention, though through his aristocratic connections very close to it, gave him the detachment necessary for a good satirist, as well as the intimacy with the tradition to know well what he was satirizing.

The moralizing of Mlle de Lussan is of absolutely no interest to Hamilton. It bespeaks a desire to be accepted into what the author thinks of as the mainstream of literary tradition, and Hamilton, if he doesn't desire to épater le bourgeois, has no need to preach to him, or indeed to take him into account at all.

Antoine Hamilton presents a pleasant contrast from most of the conteurs in Le Cabinet des fées in that he has no thought of moralizing, either to children, as did those authors in the Perrault tradition who drew from more or less indigenous sources, or to adults, as did the authors of the oriental-type tale. Even if one argues that most of

those authors were only saying that they were moralizing, one has to acknowledge that the pervasive vogue made it necessary for them to pay lip service to it in their various introductions, and make a point of justifying their contes in this way. For Hamilton no justifications are necessary; his tales are obviously intended for a small group of intimates, and it can be little more than a lucky accident that has preserved them for us.

The intimacy of the tone of Hamilton's contes can be partly attributed to the circumstances of his life at the time when he was writing them, and the kind of people for whom he was writing; for in Hamilton's case the question of thinking of the readership at which he was aiming presents no puzzle. None of Hamilton's contes was published until a decade after his death, so he was certainly not seeking immortality through the general appeal of popular works. Yet, like all satirists, he must pay his tribute to popular taste by immortalizing what he ridicules, when often the butt of his satire would have lain forgotten. This can be a risky business; if the attack on the original is too vicious, then the satirist falls into polemics and loses the sympathy of the reader who was promised something more amusing; and if the attack is not sufficiently spirited, then the purported satire becomes indistinguishable from what it satirizes. The satirist must therefore display wit and good judgment to avoid these pitfalls. There is an additional hazard when the object of satire, rather than being manners of individuals or ideas, is a literary form; for if an author is to succeed in this kind of satire, then he makes it impossible for himself as well as for others

to continue using a form which he has shown to be ridiculous. Considerable courage as well as ingenuity are therefore required to bring about the successful confrontation of a form with itself. Hamilton's is the courage of the devil-may-care aristocrat who fears nothing from critics. That he was successful is in no doubt, as his stories were copied and recopied and circulated among a group of people who were delighted by their delicacy and charm.

The main characteristic of this delicacy and charm is a hermetic quality which gives an almost metaphysical appeal to Hamilton's contes which will be discussed later. This quality is a reflection of the world in which he lived. Hamilton's circle was a very charmed one, and, at the time of writing the contes--which was in the first decade of the eighteenth century, when he was passing from his fifties to his sixties--had a very hot-house atmosphere. Of the early part of his life few details are known; indeed, in her biography of him,¹ Ruth Clark apologizes for relating the lives of his brothers, as Antoine, who was the fourth of six brothers, seems not to have had the courtly panache or military distinction of his older siblings. During the years of exile of the English court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Hamilton graced the melancholy group with his wit, and through his sister who was married to the comte de Grammont, had entrée into the best French society, and was especially welcome at the court of the duchesse du Maine at Sceaux. One can imagine that the admiration expressed by Auger in his preface to the 1861 edition of the Mémoires du Chevalier de Grammont was shared by those who knew Hamilton in these circles.

On peut dire, sans exagération, qu'Hamilton est un des phénomènes les plus extraordinaires de notre littérature. Un Anglais, élevé en France à la vérité, mais au milieu de sa famille et de ses compatriotes, et ayant ensuite habité l'Angleterre pendant environ vingt-huit ans, est revenu faire parmi nous, et dans notre langue, l'ouvrage où brillent avec le plus d'éclat ce badinage fin et léger, ce mélange de malice et de grâce, qui semblaient appartenir exclusivement aux hommes spirituels de notre nation.²

We get some impression of his life at this time from letters-- mostly undated, but all written during the first decade of the eighteenth century, either at Saint-Germain or Sceaux. In the letters to the Duke of Berwick, who was constantly away on military campaigns, he speaks of himself, charmingly and lightly, as the chief source of entertainment for the Duchess and her daughters and the other ladies of the court. He seems, however, to be the senior member of the group, and somewhat of a fossil remaining from another age. The whole court, of course, was also being fossilized, of necessity, by its anomalous situation in the country, and in addition, by the increasing isolationism of its head, James II, who was retreating farther and farther into a life of religious contemplation. In the introductory letter to "Zeneyde" addressed to one Madame de P*** Hamilton says:

Nos occupations paroissent sérieuses, et nos exercices tout chrétiens; car il n'y a point ici de quartier pour ceux qui ne sont pas la moitié du jour en prières, ou qui n'en font pas le semblant.

Le malheur commun, qui réunit d'ordinaire ceux qu'il persécute, semble avoir répandu la discorde et l'aigreur parmi nous; l'amitié dont on fait profession est souvent feinte; la haine et l'envie qu'on renferme, toujours sincères; et, tandis qu'on offre en public des vœux pour le prochain, on le déchire tout doucement en particulier.³

This letter is something of an exception; he usually tries to reassure his friends with light-hearted accounts of picnics and outings. Even

while singing the pleasures of these things, he makes it abundantly clear that he is aware of the shortcomings of such an existence. This awareness is nowhere so clearly shown as in a letter to M. de Mimure written from Sceaux on July 1st, 1705, and which it is worth quoting at some length.

Mimure, qui dans la carrière
 Où vous ont engagé l'honneur et le devoir,
 D'une constance singulière,
 Bravez du matin jusqu'au soir
 La mort, la crotte ou la poussière:
 Vous, qu'il fait souvent si beau voir,
 Dans l'oubli de toute glacière,
 Apaiser votre soif guerrière
 Sur le bord de quelque abreuvoir
 De quelque bourbeuse rivière,
 Ou bien de quelque réservoir;
 Qui passe mainte nuit entière
 Sans vous coucher, sans vous asseoir,
 Sans avoir fermé la paupière,
 Et le matin sur la bruyère
 Animé du flatteur espoir
 D'une rencontre meurtrière,
 Sans buffet, sans nappe, ou salière,
 Manger bénévolement un morceau de pain noir.
 O combien nous portons d'envie
 A tous ces travaux glorieux!
 Nous, qu'une fainéante vie,
 Nous, qu'un repos délicieux
 Près d'Iris, Aminte ou Sylvie
 Tiennent enchantés dans ces lieux.⁴

Hamilton could not be writing to a friend on a military campaign and receive the flattering reply from him that he did in fact get if there were not a lot of honesty in his admiring apostrophe to him. Yet the mock heroic tone of the several repetitions makes it impossible for us to take it all too seriously. Then when he makes the contrast between that life of action and his own idle life, we realize that although he means to denigrate the latter with the adjective "fainéante,"

this is immediately mitigated by the "délicieux" of the next line, so we have the typical Hamiltonian situation of mockery of everything.

The same letter illustrates nicely Hamilton's awareness not only of his own and others' life style, but also of the literary climate of his day; in all his remarks about contemporary literary output, we find the same mocking tone. The lines which follow those quoted above continue thus:

Car enfin l'équitable histoire,
Quand vous serez expédiés,
Vous autres, qui vers l'onde noire
N'allez jamais qu'estropiés,
De vos noms partout publiés
Saura conserver la mémoire,
En volumes bien reliés,
Tandis qu'au temple de la Gloire
Les nôtres seront oubliés.⁵

The nice irony here, of course, is that the men of action who produce no finely bound volumes in this life will be immortalized, whilst the supposedly immortal volumes of the writers will disappear. He goes on, more explicitly, "Nous qui rimons pour rire et pour faire rire les autres, ne trouvons point mauvais qu'on nous prenne pour ce que nous sommes."⁶

In the long, very charming letter to the Duke of Berwick entitled "Sur la pluie et le beau temps" he mocks in an even more overt way the current mania for versifying:

Nous ne sommes pas, Dieu merci,
Par la puissance de ces charmes
Les uniques rimeurs d'ici;
Car tout mortel a pris les armes;
Rimes par-là, rimes par-ci:
Rimes à Chaillot, à Poissi;
Jamais on ne vit de tels vacarmes;
Car il n'est pas jusques aux Carmes
Qui ne fassent des vers aussi;

Les Capucins et les Minimes,
 Et quelques Petits-Pères noirs
 Ne s'occupent dans leurs dortoirs
 Qu'à mettre tout l'office en rimes.

.

Mais ce qui plus nous embarrasse,
 C'est qu'ennuyé de nos fatras,
 Tout, jusques à la populace,
 De nous entendre paroît las.⁷

To these general remarks about Hamilton's attitudes and background must be added the following observations which may throw some light on the consideration of his contes. First of all, if any process of democratization of literature is to be seen in Perrault's or Galland's use of material provided by the lower elements of society, then Hamilton participated in this process only very accidentally; for Hamilton is thoroughly elitist. His works, as we have seen, were not originally intended for mass circulation; they were written for the pleasure of the very charmed circle of his acquaintance. References to the world outside this circle are few and scathing, as in this incident recalled in the introduction to "Zeneyde." He goes into the garden to seek refuge from the gloom of the court: "Il étoit fête ce jour-là; et par malheur, la bourgeoisie s'étoit emparée de toutes les allées avec des chiens crottés, de vilains petits enfants, et de maris plus laids que leurs femmes." He escapes from this hazard and imagines himself free "lorsque je vis sortir inopinément de la forêt la bête la plus cruelle et la moins évitable que je connoisse; c'est une veuve dont le mari est mort d'apoplexie au service du roi, et qui d'une queue de serge noire va balayer, depuis le matin jusqu'au soir les galeries du château et les allées du jardin pour demander une pension, ou trouver quelqu'un qui connoisse quelque personne qui soit connu de quelque dame qui

veuille avouer qu'elle est des amies de la favorite pour lui obtenir sa protection."⁸ For Hamilton, then, universality of appeal has no interest whatsoever, and he is content to write exclusively for those who share his opinions.

The second observation which must be made is that Hamilton displays in his works a strong sense of history (in Le Cabinet des fées this is shown particularly in "Le Béliier"). The most obvious example is the relatively straightforward historical account of the--albeit very recent--historical events in the life of his brother-in-law, le comte de Grammont. He describes with relish the scandals of the court of Charles II in England, but the most spirited part of the book is at the beginning where he speaks of the youth of Grammont and his great friend Matta. Even here, however, he cannot resist mocking his own interest in the past. He speaks of their setting out on furlough to Turin in these terms: "Ils se mirent donc en chemin tels à peu près qu'Amadis ou don Galaor après avoir reçu l'accolade et l'ordre de chevalerie, cherchant les aventures et courant après l'amour, la guerre et les enchantements. Ils valoient bien ces deux frères; car s'ils ne savoient pas autrement pourfendre géants, dérompre harnois, et porter en croupe belles damoiselles sans leur parler de rien, ils savoient jouer, et les autres n'y connoissent rien."⁹

Hamilton uses a historic background for the two contes which are not included in Le Cabinet des fées. (The matter of the selection of stories for the collection is somewhat obscure. Presumably it is because of the specifically "historic" content that these two are not included.) In "L'Enchanteur Faustus" and "Zeneyde" Hamilton uses

historical figures from Britain and France respectively as his protagonists. The former presents an irreverent picture of Queen Elizabeth I commanding a sorcerer to call up the ghosts of past beauties in order to reassure herself that she is the most beautiful woman who ever lived. The point of the story is to show the hypocrisy of the Queen's two favourites, Essex and Sydney, and her own insatiable desire for flattery. The ghost of Helen of Troy appears.

Je trouve pourtant, dit le comte d'Essex, qu'elle ne
laisse pas d'avoir les yeux assez beaux. Oui, dit Sydney,
ils sont grands, noblement fendus, noirs et brillants;
mais après tout, ses regards disent-ils quelque chose?
Pas un mot, répondit le favori. La Reine, qui ce jour-là
s'étoit fait le visage rouge comme un coq, demanda, en
parlant du visage d'Hélène, comment on trouvoit son vi-
sage de porcelaine. De porcelaine! s'écria le comte;
c'est tout au plus de la faïence!¹⁰

This use of historical setting is a most effective device for inserting contemporary comment in an apparently innocent way. We come across it again in "Zeneyde." This is the story of her Frankish and Roman ancestors told by a nymph to the narrator who meets her one day while out walking in the garden. This appearance of the author as a participant in the narrative is a favourite technique of Hamilton's, which makes possible a lively dialogue, and which also contributes to the hermetic quality mentioned above. Right at the beginning of the story we have three different examples of the kind of thing Hamilton does with his own intervention. The first is a tongue-in-cheek remark about musical fashions of his day:

La belle après avoir toussé deux ou trois fois,
Fit une espèce de prélude
Comme pour accorder sa voix;

Et puis, d'un air touchant et tendre,
 Mais d'un ton qui rendroit tout l'Opéra jaloux,
 Si l'Opéra pouvoit l'entendre,¹¹
 Elle dit en bémol: Me reconnoissez-vous?

The second example gives us an idea of the way in which, by juxtaposing the stuff that fairy tales are made of with rational reaction, one gets a strange new perspective on them. The nymph invites him to follow her to her watery palaces in the Seine.

Je veux croire, dis-je; un peu surpris de cette proposition, que vous êtes logée le plus magnifiquement du monde là-bas; mais outre que je n'aime point à faire le plongeant, et que je ne durerois pas longtemps entre deux eaux, comme j'ai quelquefois pris la liberté de me rafraîchir dans votre lit humide, si votre déité avoit eu quelque attention pour moi dans ces occasions, elle verroit bien que je ne vaux rien du tout pour un rendez-vous quand je suis mouillé.¹²

Thirdly, Hamilton makes a very rare comment on the intellectual activity of the time. Zeneyde is explaining the presence in her chamber of three flies to whom she speaks, and who turn out to be her servants in disguise:

. . . ces esprits invisibles, au lieu de régler les éléments où ils habitent, sont souvent cause des désordres qu'on y remarque, puisque les tremblements de terre, le débordement des rivières, les orages, les tonnerres et les tourbillons sont les effets de leurs caprices, et non pas de ces causes naturelles que vos philosophes n'ont fait qu'embrouiller en les voulant expliquer.¹³

In addition to this abundant evidence of Hamilton's elegant iconoclasm, "Zeneyde" yields an example of Hamilton's cynicism towards the great that we have already seen in "L'Enchanteur Faustus." There is to be a marriage between a Roman and a French girl:

Valentinien consentit au mariage de son favori avec une étrangère, et, aux instantes prières d'Aétieus, il promit même qu'il n'assisteroit pas à leurs noces. Cet honneur avoit quelquefois été fatal aux Romains qui épousoient de belles femmes.¹⁴

When we come to a discussion of the three stories of Hamilton which appear in Le Cabinet des fées, we are dealing with, first, his main production of contes, and secondly, with a different kind of story from those already mentioned. In "L'Enchanteur Faustus" and "Zeneyde," the butt of Hamilton's caustic wit is, in each case, former rulers, and if one is looking hard enough one can see in them some political comment. In "Le Béliet," "Fleur d'Epine" and "Les Quatre Facardins," however, it is largely the vogue of the conte exotique that he is satirizing. It must be emphasized that it is not the form of the conte itself which is being mocked--it has already been pointed out that he is contributing to that--but rather its exploitation in Europe.

The story which best illustrates this double point is "Fleur d'Epine," which presents a good starting point, since one critic has said of it:

. . . dans le nombre des contes d'Hamilton il en est encore un, l'Histoire de Fleur d'Epine qu'on peut hardiment présenter comme le plus beau conte de fées qu'on ait écrit en France. La raillerie y est si légère, si bien ménagée, si bien fondue avec la féerie, que, loin d'y nuire au merveilleux elle ne fait qu'y ajouter une grâce de plus.¹⁵

This is the most tightly constructed of Hamilton's stories, each of the characters having some intimate connection with the others, and all revolving round the same central point. It is also the most convincing example of the hermetic quality of Hamilton's stories; we have the same impression as of looking at the mirror in Van Eyck's famous painting of Arnolfini. We are seeing a world which is neatly contained within its frame, and in which we see reflected the face of the author.

The frame of this story consists of the ironic situation of the last of the Thousand and One Nights, which is never reached in the original version. The irreverence of Hamilton's attitude is instantly manifest:

Dès que [Shahzaman] fut sorti, Dinarzade, qui, quoiqu'un peu prompte, étoit la meilleur fille du monde, se mit à dire à la sultane: vous avez beau dire, ma soeur, il faut que vous soyez la plus sotté bête de l'univers, sauf le respect de votre rang, de votre érudition, et de votre belle mémoire, pour vous être avisée de rechercher en mariage un animal d'empereur qui, depuis deux ans que vous lui contez des fables, ne s'est avisé d'autre chose que de les écouter; et des fables qui ne seroient rien, sans la manière vive et légère dont vous les contez; cependant, je vous vois à la fin de votre recueil, et par conséquent, bien-tôt à la fin de vos jours. L'histoire que vous venez de lui conter est si misérable, qu'il n'a fait que baïller, et moi aussi, pendant ce long récit. (C.F., XX, 163)

The connection between the frame and the inner story consists of the punning repetition of the word "Tarare," which is the name of the hero of the inner story. While the main point of the name in the inner story is in the cacophony of its repetition by, first birds, then people, in the frame story, it underlines the vacuity of court life. Dinarzade takes over Sheherazade's story-telling function by addressing the sultan thus:

. . . que diriez-vous, de votre esclave, si elle vous informait de ce qui s'est aujourd'hui passé dans votre conseil? Tarare, dit le sultan! c'est justement cela, poursuivit Dinarzade. (C.F., XX, 166)

The only irruption of the frame into the main story occurs about half way through when, at the mention of a whole race of small Tarares, the sultan, despite Dinarzade's injunction, interrupts the story, and by this interruption grants life to Scheherazade. The story continues till well after day-break, and after its conclusion,

Hamilton takes a final swipe at the endlessness of the imitations of Les Mille et une nuits, and the story ends thus:

Il attendit cette nuit avec impatience comme on peut croire, et dès qu'elle fut venue, il se rendit à l'appartement de la sultane, suivi des officiers de la couronne; mais au lieu de leur donner le bonsoir, apres être déshabillé, il se tourna vers le prince de Trébizonde, pour lui ordonner de conter toutes les aventures qui lui étoient arrivées . . .; l'amoureux prince auroit bien voulu se dispenser d'un récit qui devoit durer tout le reste de la nuit; mais comme il savoit que le sultan son maître n'entendoit pas raillerie quand il étoit question de contes, il commença le sien, comme on verra dans la suite de ce recueil. (C.F., XX, 289-290)

All of which can hardly be said to end the story.

So much for the frame; as for the inner tale itself, Hamilton cannot help but make it a charming, compact, closely woven story which enhances the genre he seeks to discredit. Briefly, the hero, Tarare, effects a cure for the dazzling, destructive light which emanates from the eyes of the princesse Luisante by rescuing the lovely Fleur d'Epine, along with the mare Sonnante and the luminous hat from the clutches of the wicked sorceress, Dentue. After this rescue, Dentue pursues Fleur D'Epine, and, disguised as a Moorish attendant, bewitches her, so that she appears to be dead, and is about to be burnt on a funeral pyre when the good sorceress, Serène, puts in a timely appearance. Serène, who is in fact Fleur d'Epine's aunt, restores to his handsome human form the parrot which has been fascinating Luisante, and which gives immunity to the dazzle of her eyes to the person who carries it on his wrist. This young man is the twin brother of Tarare, whose name is really Pinson. Serène had transformed him into a parrot in order to save him from the amorous advances and evil designs of Dentue. Serène destroys Dentue on the

pyre intended for Fleur d'Epine--despite the latter's tender-hearted protests; Luisante and Phénix are united, and Fleur d'Epine and her happy consort Tarare go off to rule over her inheritance of Circassia, whose king was her unfortunate father.

Even this brief exposé of the plot--which has many more convolutions than are here apparent--is sufficient to indicate the dominant theme of the story: that of the various kinds of dualism which are the fundamental stock-in-trade of the fairy-tale tradition. This dualism has many levels in the story. To begin with, the male characters are twins, and represent the dichotomy between beauty and wit, which is best exemplified elsewhere in Le Cabinet des fées in "Riquet à la houe." What is original about Hamilton's treatment of this idea is that beauty here does not seem to have any of the negative aspects usually attendant upon it. It is true that it is Tarare's intelligence which has distinguished him in the eyes of Serène, as being the person most likely to bring about the rescue of Fleur d'Epine, and therefore as being the most worthy husband for her; but his twin also gets the girl he is in love with, namely Luisante, and they are represented as a happy, well-matched couple.

The second dichotomy is between the two heroines of the story--both princesses--whose characteristics can be divined from their names. Luisante is spoiled and headstrong and Fleur d'Epine is docile and gentle as a flower. When Tarare first sets eyes on her, she is the cowed slave of Dentue and her hideous son Dentillon; during her final ordeal, she submits uncomplainingly to the tortures imposed upon her by Dentue. Luisante is the reverse of uncomplaining. At the outset

of the story, when Tarare suggests that she wear a leafy green head-dress as an interim measure against the glare of her eyes, she finds that it lends a greenish tinge to her complexion, and hurls it off in a rage. Near the end of the story, when the parrot to which she had taken such a fancy has disappeared, Tarare is astonished when: "il la vit à terre qui s'arrachoit les cheveux" (C.F., XX, 237). Again, however, we have no impression of opprobrium accruing on account of these outbursts. The possibility is recognized of both types being valid modes of behaviour, and each ends up with what she wants.

The most interesting dualism is between good and evil, here personified by Serène and Dentue. It is in this opposition, and in his way of treating it, that Hamilton looks back to the tradition of occultism as it appears in much folk literature of East and West, and also looks forward to its development in later, Gothic, horror stories. On the former level, it is simply a question of who knows more spells, Serène or Dentue, and because she has the greater power, it is Serène who wins on this score. On the latter level, however, we find in the story told by Serène, an emphasis on her father's obsession with mastering the unknown, and on her own interest in it. Her father "négligea le gouvernement de ses états, pour s'informer comment les étoiles se gouvernent là-haut" (C.F., XX, 275). After a brief lapse from his studies which enabled him to find a bride, he returned to his former pursuits:

Il choisit pour sa retraite, cette partie de la montagne que des rochers et des précipices rendent affreuse: ce fut là qu'il se mit à fouiller dans les entrailles de la terre, après avoir puisé dans les régions célestes tout ce que l'esprit humain est capable d'en apprendre.

Bientôt il eut atteint la perfection presque inaccessible de ce travail merveilleux, où les races suivantes virent tant d'esprits solides devenir visionnaires, et tant de solides trésors dissipés, pour courir après un bien imaginaire.

L'accomplissement de cet ouvrage ne lui laissa rien à souhaiter; il convertissoit à son gré tous les métaux en or, et les puissances invisibles répandus dans les airs, obéissoient à ses commandemens. Il se fit, par leur ministère, un palais dans le milieu de cette montagne où les choses même du plus vil usage éclatoient par l'or ou brilloient par les pierreries. (C.F., XX, 276-277)

We find this mastery of the elements, and obsession with the occult much later in "Vathek." Critics invariably mention Beckford when speaking of Hamilton. The fact that "Vathek" is an oriental tale, that it was written in French by an Englishman, who is a collateral descendant of Hamilton's to boot, makes for too titillating a comparison to be overlooked. In fact, "Vathek" belongs to the tradition which produced Frankenstein and other Gothic horrors, and is far removed from Hamilton's universe. The final sequence in "Vathek," which takes place in the nether-world, has the quality of the visions induced by drugs, whereas Hamilton's scenes are very much those of a fully conscious imagination. In the case of the question of dominance over nature, Hamilton is concerned with some very abstract idea of the forces of good and evil, whereas Beckford associates the good with some form of religious power. There is, however, an affinity between the two in that they make a pointed association between evil and sexuality. When Vathek is presented as a good ruler at the beginning of the story, his relations with his harem are decorous and judicious, but when he succumbs to the forces of evil his chief concubine is made out to be a corrupting creature and his designs on the daughter of his pious host are vile and lecherous. In "L'Histoire de

Fleur d'Epine," Dentue promises death to Phénix unless he marries her--and all readers of fairy tales know that any kind of sexual interest on the part of someone hideous is quite repulsive. The other unpleasant female character in the story is the wife of the sénéchal, who is more than pleased when Tarare stays at their house. When he leaves on his quest, he does so "malgré les regrets de madame la sénéchale" (C.F., XX, 172). The good, however, are chaste; Serène is unmarried, although taking a lively interest in Fleur d'Epine and her other nieces.

When he mentions the possibilities of latter-day psychoanalysis offered by Hamilton's contes, André-M. Rousseau says:

. . . la jument Sonnante, harnachée de grelots avertisseurs, et le chapeau lumineux, commode phare explorateur, résistent à l'interprétation freudienne.¹⁶

One cannot write off in this way Dentue's extremely long tooth--at one point we see her stirring a potion in a cauldron with it. In this very male symbol resides her power over people as we discover at the moment when she discovers that instead of burning Fleur d'Epine, she has destroyed her own son, Dentillon:

Le cri qu'elle poussa, fut si terrible, que j'en frémis d'horreur, et le chêne où j'étois en fut ébranlé; il fut si violent, que cette longue dent qui lui sortoit de la bouche sauta plus de cinquante pas loin d'elle, brisée en mille morceaux. Une autre n'auroit pas regretté cette perte: mais pour elle, sa furie en augmenta; c'en est fait, s'écria-t-elle, tous mes charmes m'abandonnent, recourons à l'artifice. (C.F., XX, 269)

In contrast to the stylized nature of most of the events, characters and objects in the story, there is a moment of what might almost be called psychological realism during the conversation which takes place between Tarare and Fleur d'Epine after he

has rescued her from Dentue. Each expresses in a rather touching way his misgivings that he is not sufficiently interesting to maintain the interest of the other. This kind of thing is not normally associated with fairy stories; in this case it is tied up with the Voltairean insight into himself which Tarare's gift of wit has bestowed upon him. When he speaks of the moment of the choice of this gift open to himself and his brother, he says of his brother:

. . . à l'age de dix-huit ans, c'étoit ce qu'on n'avoit jamais vu de plus beau dans notre sexe; mais pour moi, quoiqu'on me flattât sur les gentilleses de mon esprit, je regardois cela comme ce qu'on dit de tous les enfans du monde, quand les pères et les mères vont fatiguant tous les gens de leurs bons-mots; et je ne me sentois qu'autant d'esprit qu'il en falloir pour connoître que je n'en avois pas assez. (C.F., XX, 199)

Now, after rescuing Fleur d'Epine, he again takes stock of himself:

Il n'avoit plus que la crainte de ne pas plaire à ce qu'il aimoit, et c'étoit bien assez; il étoit trop éclairé sur son mérite pour se flatter d'aucun espoir sur l'agrément de sa figure; il ne savoit que trop que sans le secours de son esprit et de son amour, il n'y avoit rien en lui de fort engageant. (C.F., XX, 197)

(We shall return in a moment to other Voltairean sentiments such as these; we surely recognize this nice technique of making an aside of those things which are really important in favour of popularly accepted trivia.) Fleur d'Epine is much simpler in her outpourings, being convinced that she must be much inferior to Luisante:

Que j'étois folle . . . de me flatter un moment qu'on put oublier la plus belle personne du monde pour songer à une creature comme Fleur d'Epine. (C.F., XX, 213)

In each case, the result of all this doubting is that each is more than ever reassured of the fidelity of the other.

To return to the Voltairean aspect of Hamilton's work, we find that it has been acknowledged by many critics, Voltaire himself among them. In Le Temple du goût he represents him as:

. . . vif Hamilton
Toujours armé d'un trait qui blesse,
Médissant de l'humaine espèce.¹⁷

"L'Histoire de Fleur d'Epine" presents several good examples of these shafts, some of which give Hamilton a certain affinity with the conte philosophique. When various remedies are suggested for the deadly effects of Luisante's glances:

Les uns furent d'avis de mettre Luisante dans un couvent soutenant qu'il n'y auroit pas grand mal, quand trois ou quatre douzaines de vieilles religieuses, avec leur abbesse, perdroient la vue pour le bien de l'état.
(C.F., XX, 169)

In addition to the obvious irony of this, we should remember that all this is meant to be taking place in an oriental court at some time in the very distant past. The comments about the dignitaries of this court are not flattering. When the seneschal first mentions Tarare to the caliph, it is in these terms:

. . . quoique j'aie l'honneur d'être votre sénéchal, je ne suis qu'une bête auprès de lui; ma femme me le dit tous les jours. (C.F., XX, 170)

He then urges the caliph to address Tarare:

Parlez-lui hardiment, Sire, dit le sénéchal, il entend toutes sortes de langues; le calife qui ne savoit que la sienne, et même assez vulgairement, après avoir quelque tems rêvé, pour trouver un tour spirituel: mon ami, lui dit-il, comment vous appelez-vous? (C.F., XX, 170)

Tarare suggests to the caliph that the advice of Serène should be sought:

. . . envoyez-lui quelque bagatelle d'un million ou deux, et si elle ne vous enseigne un remède pour les yeux de la princesse, vous pouvez compter qu'il n'y en a point.
(C.F., XX, 172)

When Serène appears in the nick of time to prevent Fleur d'Epine from being burned on the funeral pyre:

. . . la sénéchale en fut si troublée qu'on lui eut vu changer de couleur, si celles de son visage eussent été naturelles. (C.F., XX, 244)

Finally, when the caliph is showing off to Serène the sumptuous room he had had built before the birth of Luisante in order to counteract the evils which should attend the birth of the son he had been warned of in a dream, and asks Serène to explain the dream, she replies:

. . . votre songe étoit purement un songe, vos interprètes des imposteurs ou des ignorans, et celui qui vous a conseillé ce salon un architecte qui vouloit profiter de l'avis qu'il vous donnoit. (C.F., XX, 256)

If we recognize these remarks as very Gallic, we can also find examples of what must surely be Anglo-Saxon leavening. These reveal a predilection for nonsense which Hamilton shares with Lewis Carroll and the Goons and Monty Python. One of these examples occurs in the sequence quoted above, in the initial conversation between Tarare and the caliph:

. . . pourquoi vous appelez-vous Tarare. . . ? Parce que ce n'est pas mon nom. Et comment cela, dit le Calife? C'est que j'ai quitté mon nom pour prendre celui-là, dit-il: ainsi je m'appelle Tarare quoique ce ne soit pas mon nom. Il n'y a rien de si clair, dit le Calife, et cependant j'aurois été plus d'un mois à le trouver. (C.F., XX, 170-171)

Lest the reader become too involved with the story, Hamilton makes a few interpolations to keep him at a distance; the story-teller is, it will be remembered, Dinarzade, but she is here a cover for the light-hearted cynicism of Hamilton himself. At the end of the conversation between Tarare and Fleur d'Epine quoted above, the story-teller exclaims:

Pour moi, j'avoue je n'en fus pas fâché; car je croyois qu'ils ne quitteroient jamais le sommet de cette montagne, où leurs sentimens, aussi bien que leurs incertitudes, m'ont un peu ennuyé, comme ils auront fait votre majesté sérénissime. (C.F., XX, 128)

As there is no agreement of the participles in this passage, we may assume that Hamilton does indeed take himself to be the story-teller at this juncture.

In all three of Hamilton's stories which appear in Le Cabinet des fées, there is a traditional fairy-story emphasis on animals--traditional to the native European variety, that is. What is unusual about "Fleur d'Epine" is that with the exception of the mare Sonnante, animal appearances are restricted to birds, and of these there is a multitude. The feathery tone is established at the outset of the story of Tarare's twin, when we find that the original names of the heroes were Phénix and Pinson. Phénix is subsequently changed into a parrot. During their adventures, both enter the castle where they find the magpies playing a strange game of cards, watched over by an old crow. These turn out to be the mother and sisters of Fleur d'Epine, who have also been transformed by a spell. Birds' ability to fly gives them omniscient possibilities and it certainly means that the tone of the story is anything but pedestrian. The lightness of touch is emphasised by the décor of the story. André-M. Rousseau speaks of Hamilton as using a "décor toujours minéral (or et acier, cristal, roches, eaux)"¹⁸; this is not quite the case in this story, however. Much of the action takes place in the forest or in Dentue's garden, and from time to time, the gorgeous landscape of Kashmir is evoked.

It is unnecessary to discuss in similar detail the remaining two stories. Suffice it to point out some of their most essential characteristics. The fact that "Fleur d'Epine" is only tenuously attached to the aim of satirizing a given form makes it possible for Hamilton's imagination to have full rein without pushing it to the limits of preposterousness; it is therefore the most delightful of the stories. "Les Quatre Facardins," on the other hand, whilst more successful as a satire, is less satisfying as an aesthetic experience. It has a verse introduction in which Hamilton states his intentions. He addresses it to a friend whom he calls "adorable Sylvie" and says:

Je ne connois que trop la honte
De mettre au jour conte sur conte;
Cependant, si vous l'ordonnez,
Je vais, en dépit du scrupule,
Suivre les lois que vous donnez,
Et me livrer au ridicule
Des fatras que j'ai condamnés.
(C.F., XX, 295)

He gives a brief history of recent literary taste: novels "depuis Cyrus jusqu'à Zayde" he dismisses as "cette lecture insipide." Then came the mania for classical themes which was superseded by the fairy story.

Ensuite vinrent de Syrie
Volumes de contes sans fin,
Où l'on avoit mis à dessein
L'orientale allégorie,
Les énigmes et le génie
Du thalmudisme et du rabbin,
Et ce bon goût de leur patrie,
Qui, loin de se perdre en chemin,
Parut, sortant de chez Barbin,
Plus arabe qu'en Arabie.
(C.F., XX, 293)

He begs not to be forced to write any more in this mode himself and concludes:

Vous qui disposez de ma vie,
 Qui la comblez d'heur ou d'ennuis
 Souffrez, de grâce, que j'oublie
 Les engagement où je suis.
 En vain je fais l'apologie
 Du conte de la nymphe Alie
 Et de la dernière des nuits
 S'il me faut faire autre folie,
 Et coudre un nouveau supplément
 Au dernier tome de Galland.
 (C.F., XX, 295)

The resulting "fatras" is indeed a morass of interwoven plots which defy any attempt to give a coherent account of the simple story line. It illustrates admirably what André-M. Rousseau says about Hamilton's stories in general:

. . . après la narration brute d'aventures incompréhensibles liées à de mystérieux objets, sans la moindre suite perceptible, chacun des héros, homme ou animal, reprend le récit pour son propre compte, si bien qu'après avoir entendu les mêmes faits rapportés selon les divers points de vue, le lecteur, à condition d'être patient et attentif, finit par comprendre qu'il ne s'agit que d'une seule et même histoire, dont il ressoude peu à peu les fragments désarticulés, en découvrant que l'énigme reposait surtout sur son ignorance des tenants et aboutissants. Comme les motivations se cantonnent dans la plus extrême convention (exploits absurdes à accomplir, recherche d'une personne perdue, fuite, destruction d'un sortilège), les héros étant absolument dépourvus du moindre Ego, le lecteur se heurte à un pur réseau d'incidents gratuits, dont les noeuds, noués et dénoués à plaisir, tracent un univers aléatoire, arythmique et désorienté, pour lequel l'explication, au sens étymologique, relève de l'intellect et non de la sensibilité.¹⁸

The problems inherent in this exposé are present, either only to a very minor degree or not at all in the other stories, which have a relatively clear chronology and lucid juxtaposition of units; in this story, however, the interrelation of frame story with inner story is very subtle indeed. The tale is told by the Prince of Trebizond who is at the

court of Shahriar. A large portion of his adventures is concerned with his attempt to deliver Crystalline from the clutches of the genie, her husband, who keeps her imprisoned in a great crystal rock in the middle of the Red Sea. In order to set her free, he must, among other things, without resorting to force, get the rings off a great circle she has in her possession. She explains that as punishment to the genie for keeping her a prisoner, she took advantage of the long hours when he was sleeping on her lap to importune any man she met, and the rings are proof of her successful encounters. The recital of her adventures concludes thus:

J'avois sur moi ce clavier que vous voyez si chargé de bagues, et ce sont celles des personnes qui m'ont assistée dans mes infidélités et dont aucun ne s'y est porté que de la plus mauvaise grace du monde, mais surtout les deux derniers, qui me parurent les coquins les plus lâches et les plus effrayés qui fussent dans l'univers.

Comment dites-vous cela, Trébizonde, mon ami, dit le sultan en l'interrompant? Seigneur, poursuivit l'autre, je disois que la vertueuse Crystalline ayant mené ses aventures jusqu'à la quatre-vingt-dix-huitième, me conta que les deux qui fournirent les deux dernières bagues, étoient des misérables qui mouroient de peur: elle en a menti, dit le sultan; mais poursuivez votre histoire, nous en parlerons une autre fois. (C.F., XX, 403-404)

It is immediately obvious to any reader of Galland--as all Hamilton's readers must have been--that the two wretches in question were Shahriar and his brother Shahzaman.

We realize from the verses quoted above that this is chronologically the last of Hamilton's stories, and it is as if he were trying to outdo himself and other fairy stories in extravagance. The adventures which befall the various characters are outrageous even in the context of fairy stories; we find a lion hunt in which the hunters are accompanied by young maidens each bearing a cockerel; if the bird gets

lost, it means that the maiden is promiscuous and must be buried alive; the Princess Mousseline la Sérieuse is bathing in the river one day, when suddenly the waters swell and reveal an enormous crocodile which gobbles up all her attendants. In addition to the incredible nature of these adventures, many of them are left suspended in a most haphazard way.

In "Les Quatre Facardins" we find vague references to tales other than those of the oriental variety. Hamilton at one point takes a leaf out of Cervantes' book. The secretary of the first Facardin, who is weary of their misfortunes, says indignantly:

Laissez donc là, s'il vous plaît, la démangeaison de gloire qui vous tourmente, jusqu'à ce que vous soyez en état d'en acquérir: nous sommes à trois journées du golfe persique; c'est dans cette ville enrichie du commerce de cette mer que l'on trouve les plus beaux chevaux du monde, et c'est là que je conseille votre altesse de se défaire de ces désastreux chameaux, pour nous monter à la façon des héros errans, au lieu de trotter par le monde comme des marchands Arméniens, ou des pèlerins de la Mecque. (C.F., XX, 356)

One outstanding feature which this story has in common with the other two in Le Cabinet des fées is an emphasis on the importance of names. The whole conceit of this story is that there are three (presumably Hamilton meant originally to add a fourth) characters each called Facardin, each convinced that his name is unique. The Prince of Trebizond claims that he is so called, because when he was born, his mother was persuaded of the importance of giving the right name to her son, and was about to consult the oracle, when her pet parrot pronounced the name "Facardin," and she resolved to name him accordingly. When he meets the second Facardin, this latter is sure that it is his name which is responsible for his ill fortune, and the

three Facardins come together because their adventures all revolve around the possession of the name. Because he lays so much emphasis on it, we may be sure that Hamilton grasps the magical significance of the knowledge of someone's name which gives one power over that person; but paradoxically the names in these stories are given in the most arbitrary way imaginable--namely through the mindless cawings of birds--we will recall that it was from the magpies and crow who repeated the name "Tarare" that the hero of "L'Histoire de Fleur d'Epine" got his name. We therefore get a sense of the extreme hazardness of the acquisition of something which is to play such an important role in the life of an individual.

The remaining story--"Le Bélier"--is similarly centred round a name. This time, however, it is the name of a place rather than that of a person. Hamilton's sister, the comtesse de Grammont, had acquired a property whose original name had been Moulineau, but finding this barbarous, she changed it to Pontalie which she found more euphonious. The story therefore, is an explanation of the new name, which has to do with a nymph called Alie. The effect that having the conclusion in mind at the outset of a story has upon its development is that which is familiar to children who read Just So Stories. Absolutely extraordinary events and objects are bent to the task of bringing the story to its pre-ordained ending. An additional enigma in this tale is that Hamilton's contemporaries were probably meant to recognize portraits of Hamilton's acquaintance among the characters. Alie is presumably his sister; we know from Les Mémoires du Comte de Grammont that she had had many suitors before her marriage, and in the story, countless young

men die of misery at Alie's refusal of their offer of their hand.

"Le Béliier" has an intercalated story which has absolutely nothing to do with the main plot, but is simply told by the ram to make his master the giant fall asleep--in the best tradition of the Arabian Nights--and which is the only such example we find in Hamilton, as in all other cases the sub-stories have some connection with the main story. This story is called "L'Histoire de Bertharite et Ferandine." When the ram begins the narration he starts to speak of the white fox who had been wounded and of the queen who visited him. When the giant protests that he is thrown into total confusion by the business of starting a tale in medias res, the ram claims that it is in total contravention of accepted fashion to begin a story at the beginning, and that one should never expect a chronological order of events.

Although there is a great variety of animals throughout "Le Béliier"--the eponymous one being the most important--Hamilton yet reveals his predilection for parrots. Alie's father, who is a magician, has a tiny servant called Poinçon. One of the details of his appearance is that: "il étoit habillé de plumes de perroquet de différentes couleurs" (C.F., XX, 26); and we remember that Tarare's brother had been changed into a brilliant parrot in "Fleur d'Epine" to preserve him from the clutches of Dentue. This recurrence surely bespeaks Hamilton's fascination with a creature which apparently straddles two worlds, and is therefore a fantastic beast, for it speaks with the words of men, yet it has nothing to say.

In the literary tradition Hamilton himself straddles two worlds: he belongs to the generation of Perrault and from contemporaries absorbed the tradition of the "folk" tale. Upon the oriental tale which exploded into the literary scene during his old age he looked with fascination which was mingled with scepticism as he contemplated its manifold imitations. From an aesthetic point of view, Hamilton is at all times lively, often cynical, sometimes tender and his tales reveal his charm and urbanity which make a significant contribution to the history of the fairy story.

In addition, he shows us a different aspect of the stories from other authors. We are about to see that certain other authors wrote fairy stories as an expression of a private joke, but nowhere do we find the fairy story used in such a private way as by Hamilton. For him it is a gentle tribute to the individuals for whom he was writing, intended to provoke, not the curled lip of derision, but a smile of collusion. This, together with the fact that his imagination is very wide-ranging gives him an appeal which the rather prissy stories of Mlle de Lussan--and certainly Mme de Lintot, for example--do not possess. It has already been emphasized that the stories we are discussing enjoy, at best, a relative survival: Hamilton's are marginally better-known than any we have discussed heretofore, and deservedly so; in addition to creating entertaining stories, he brings our attention in an intelligent way to others and causes us to ponder on the genre as well as to enjoy his own examples thereof.

CHAPTER VII

CAYLUS

We have seen in "Le Béliet" that Hamilton turned for inspiration from the Orient to a western European setting. Caylus and Duclos too write fairy tales like those of Perrault, but with the important addition of social satire. Rousseau, in his charming story, introduces a vaguely oriental setting, but we recognise in the elements of the story standard western themes.

The relative literary merits of the three authors will be apparent even from this sampling of their minor works, and we will realize that we are set on an upward curve. Caylus is not well treated as an author even by his only biographer, Samuel Rocheblave, who sees him as a distinguished archaeologist and antiquarian rather than as a writer. Nevertheless, we find in his tales confirmation of the essential element of Caylus which Rocheblave describes thus: "cette singulière antithèse: un libertin de la Régence qui a les mœurs et la morale du XVIII^e siècle, avec les goûts et les idées du XVII^e."¹ That this antithesis rules Caylus is not hard to understand; he was the dutiful son of a woman who had been something of a figure at the court, being the niece and protégée of Mme de Maintenon. Caylus himself when a youth was dandled on the knees of the king. His devotion

to his mother was extreme; indeed, he never really recovered from her death in 1729, although he was thirty-eight years old himself. That he would have absorbed some of the attitudes of that court is hardly surprising. Among its literary fashions was a strong predilection for fairy stories, as we know from many literary references of the time. One of the most charming of these, and one which depends for its effect upon the universal popularity of fairy stories, occurs in Saint-Simon's account of the character of the duc d'Orléans, who was about to become Regent:

Madame [mother of the duc] étoit pleine de contes et de petits romans de fées: elle disoit qu'elles avoient toutes été conviées à ses couches, que toutes y étoient venues, et que chacune avoit doué son fils d'un talent, de sorte qu'il les avoit tous; mais que par malheur on avoit oublié une vieille fée disparue depuis si longtemps qu'on ne se souvenoit pas d'elle, qui, piquée de l'oubli, vint appuyée sur son petit bâton, et n'arriva qu'après que toutes les fées eurent fait chacune leur don à l'enfant; que dépitée de plus en plus, elle se vengea en le douant de rendre absolument inutiles tous les talents qu'il avoit reçus de toutes les autres fées, d'aucun desquels, en les conservant tous, il n'avoit jamais pu se servir.²

One can only speculate upon how this very old motif--the rage of a slighted fairy--which was used by Adam le Bossu in Le Jeu de la feuillée in thirteenth century Arras, survived intact and unrecorded in literary circles, to surface, above all places, in Versailles at the death of the Sun King. Although Perrault's sources are unclear, the frontispiece of his first edition of Les Contes de ma mère l'oye depicts an old woman seated in front of a fire, speaking to children, who, judging by their clothes, are obviously of a higher social order, so one assumes that such tales were in fact the preserve of the peasantry, as experts in comparative folk literature have been telling

us. By the time Caylus was frequenting the court, however, they had been taken over enthusiastically by the courtiers. When we look in detail at some of Caylus' "Féeries Nouvelles," we shall see something of his ambivalent attitude to this dichotomy.

On the other hand, it becomes immediately obvious that Caylus was stirred by forces very much outside the scope of his mother's life, and his own sphere of interest was widened by them. As a young man he travelled in the Middle East and made an exciting trip into the desert to visit some ruins under the guidance of some wild brigands. This trip was to form the basis for his subsequent life-long interest in antiquities--an interest which was harshly treated by Diderot after his death in the famous couplet:

Ci-gît un antiquaire acariâtre et brusque.
Ah! qu'il est bien logé dans cette cruche étrusque!

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Caylus' literary interests extended to the current passion for oriental tales, and indeed, we find that he is the author of some "Nouveaux Contes orientaux."

Of these two kinds of stories Caylus writes years later:

Ceux qui ont lu les féeries que j'ai publiées, ont du s'appercevoir, au premier coup d'oeil, que je n'ai eu, par-tout, d'autre but que d'emmieller la viande salubre à l'enfant, comme dit Montaigne. (C.F., XXV, 382)

He goes on to explain how he came to write the third kind of story we have by him:

Une femme respectable, & qui tenoit encore de la vieille cour, avoit deux jeunes petit-fils, dont l'un étoit d'une impatience extrême, & l'autre d'un caquet qui ne finissoit point. La bonne grand'mère crut que deux contes sur ces sujets pourroient les corriger, & elle me pria de les faire: je n'avois rien à lui refuser, & j'eus à m'applaudir de ma confiance; car à force de les lire et relire,

chacun des deux contes produisit l'effet qu'on en attendoit.... Quoi qu'il en soit, ces contes leur furent profitables; &, de quelque oeil qu'on les regarde, les contes de fées le seront toujours. (C.F., XXV, 382-83)

These two stories, although certainly no worse than many of their kind, are of minimal interest because they are so exclusively tied to their moral purpose, which does not allow much leeway for the expression of subliminal ideas which are revealed in the earlier stories. The first of the two is "Cadichon," the moral of which, endlessly repeated, is "tout vient à point à qui peut attendre." A king and a queen have no children; the queen finally becomes pregnant, but after nine months nothing happens, except that the queen gets larger; this happens several times--on each of which occasions the queen repeats her saw. Finally, seven children are born simultaneously, to the dismay of their parents and they become the pawns in a power play between good and wicked fairies, in which the good eventually wins, and the favourite youngest child, Cadichon, is given a kingdom and a happy marriage. The main charm of the story lies in a couple of happy visual moments when, in order to hide them from the wicked fairy, the good fairy makes the children invisible, but so that she does not lose track of them herself, she leaves the tips of their noses visible.

"Jeannette" is much shorter and makes its point succinctly. Jeannette's humble parents give her up to a fairy to be brought up in her castle. She was, however, a babbler in her early days and cannot control her tongue in her new station. Through her indiscretions, she sets the little princesses, who also live in the castle, at loggerheads, so the fairy punishes her by sending her to live in the middle of a desert. Whilst there, she discovers the secret of the fairy's wand.

She burns to pass on the information and manages to train a parrot from the aviary to repeat:

Si tu prends la baguette, quand la fée dormira,
Tu n'as qu'à commander, le ciel t'obéira. (C.F., XXV, 450)

Jeannette then asks to be allowed to send the parrot as a gift to the other little girls. The fairy, touched by this generosity, takes the parrot herself, and thereby discovers the ruse. Enraged, she turns Jeannette into a magpie and sends her back to her parents in a wicker cage with the dubious consolation: "elle leur dit de faire attention qu'ils avoient gagné du moins son entretien et dot et qu'un peu de fromage suffiroit dorénavant pour sa nourriture." Thus we have illustrated the moral:

Tout indiscret est curieux;
Prenons garde avec qui nous sommes.
On croit qu'il faut parler pour vivre avec les hommes;
Savoir se taire vaut bien mieux. (C.F., XXV, 457)

The moral intent is very explicitly made in these occasional stories, as it was in the "Féeries Nouvelles" published by Caylus in response to public demand for such tales, in a collection in 1741. "La Princesse Minutie et le Roi Floridor," for example, has as its heroine a tiny princess who is fascinated by tiny things. The neighbouring prince gallantly comes to the rescue of her threatened little kingdom with the help of a sparrow, a small knife and a hazelnut, which are given to him by his guardian fairy. All this is to illustrate the moral reflection of the princess at the end:

Elle fut honteuse d'avoir toujours fait de petites choses
avec de grands secours, pendant que son amant en avoit
fait de si grandes avec de si petits. (C.F., XXIV, 496)

"Les Dons" has the quality of a mediaeval morality tale in that moral

attributes are embodied very exclusively in various people so that all is morally black and white without the shades of in-between grey which, as Gilbert Ryle points out, are the hallmark of eighteenth century writers.³ In this story, Sylvie, favourite among the young people raised at the court of the Fée aux Fleurs, is sent to visit various ladies, each endowed with a specific gift, in order to decide which she will choose for her own. Her first hostess, Iris, has chosen the gift of beauty. Sylvie returns to her guardian disillusioned:

J'ai remarqué que cette beauté que vous lui avez donnée et qui m'a parue éblouissante, lui ôtoit absolument l'usage de son esprit; qu'en se montrant, et qu'en se laissant voir, elle croyoit avoir tout fait. (C.F., XXIV, 293)

She next visits the princess Daphnée whose gift is that of eloquence.

Her reaction is as follows:

Que l'éloquence sied mal à une femme.... Il est vrai que la princesse Daphnée parle en beaux termes, que ses mots sont justes et qu'ils sont bien choisis, mais elle ne déparle point; elle commence toujours par charmer, et finit par ennuyer. (C.F., XXIV, 295)

She reacts similarly to princesses endowed with the gifts of pleasing and of vivacity, and when her turn to choose finally comes she asks for "un esprit paresseux," of which it is said: "Ce caractère est divin, il conduit ordinairement à la tendresse et à tous les agréments de la vie dans tous les âges" (C.F., XXIV, 300). This somewhat singular attitude may well be questioned as exhibiting an extraordinary passivity on the part of the author. It may, however turn out to be one of the stock-in-trades of the fairy-story teller, which is not usually expressed in such an overt way. It is not difficult for us to think of examples of two different kinds of fairy stories, one in which the

hero or heroine achieves his end through his own efforts, and the other in which the supernatural takes over and the humans become puppets in the hands of fairies, witches, giants or whatever. In this latter case, there is no need for the human character to exert himself at all; if he is protected by good fairies, then he will get what he most desires without effort, and if he is being foiled by wicked fairies, his natural qualities will avail him nothing. Human figures in this kind of story are in a state of being rather than doing. If they are good, kind and beautiful they do not usually have to do anything, as the circumstances which bring about the dénouement of their story are taken out of their control. Cendrillon, therefore, is very different from, say, le Petit Poucet. Left to her own devices, she would presumably still be sleeping in the ashes, being harried by the females in her family. Her being able to go to the ball is a consequence of her kindly nature, rather than of any positive steps she took to bring it about. Le Petit Poucet, on the other hand, having taken stock of the situation in the house of the ogre, takes wise action in order to preserve himself and his brothers.

Caylus on the whole comes down firmly on the side of this passivity. Many of his stories treat of children or young people who were adopted by fairies at an early age, so their destiny is taken out of the hands of their human parents right at the outset. Human responsibility seems thus to be abrogated, and we are left with the impression that fate must be allowed to take over completely. We have a curiously practical instance of passivity in the story "Le

Palais des Idées." In this story, Prince Constant, despite the warnings of his protective fairy Minatine, falls in love with the princess Rosanie, who has a heart of stone. He lets his kingdom fall to rack and ruin in the hope that he can persuade her to love him, and finally Minatine takes pity on him. She claims she cannot bring about what he is asking by direct means, but as some kind of consolation, she bestows upon him the ability to summon up and enter the Palace of Ideas any time he wishes. This is described as being able to take whatever form its possessor desires, and to contain whomsoever he wants to invite. In other words, Constant is given licence to fantasize to his heart's content, and to enjoy the complaisance of Rosanie, at least in his imagination. The pleasures afforded by this fantasy-life bring some measure of peace of mind to Constant, and Rosanie, observing the difference in him, wants to know the reason for it. He explains and she asks to have the same gift bestowed upon her. As love has not touched her, however, she cannot use the gift. That is to say, if one does not aspire to the great satisfactions of love, one has nothing to fantasize about, so one therefore cannot fantasize. She realizes, however, that she is missing something pleasurable. By first becoming aware of the possibility of pleasure, she opens herself to the knowledge of it, and at length discovers its delights. She and Constant are married, and find that they are no longer to have the gift of the Palace of Ideas. They ask why and Minatine explains:

... elle craignit que les idées ne fussent contraires au bonheur de leur situation présente; car enfin les idées conduisent aisément à la jalousie. C'est en vain qu'on lui donnera le beau nom de délicatesse; la délicatesse d'un

mari est presque toujours une jalousie terrible, et certainement elle est toujours au moins une fadeur. Minatine prit donc le sage parti de soustraire les idées à l'un et à l'autre; et mon avis est qu'elle fit bien. (C.F., XXIV, 358)

Here we have a statement about the ending of a fairy-story. Once the originally stated end has been brought about, one may ask no further, and the characters themselves are to be kept within the boundaries of their union unquestioningly.

There appears in the stories of Caylus a strange discrepancy between the political ramifications of this passivity and the many asides disparaging the Establishment. On the one hand we find him saying such things as:

Il y avoit autrefois un roi et une reine qui vivoient, (quoiqu'il y a bien longtemps qu'ils soient morts) à peu près comme les princes vivent aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire, en suivant leurs goûts. (C.F., XXIV, 247)

Or again, with heavy irony:

Aussi depuis le temps que la féerie est un peu tombée, les rois d'à présent gouvernent-ils par eux-mêmes; ils ont tous de l'esprit, de la connoissance des affaires, de la capacité, et sur-tout ils s'attachent à connoître le coeur humain. (C.F., XXIV, 105)

Or, less specifically about the court:

Tout homme riche est à redouter; dans tous les pays, ses injustices pour l'ordinaire sont révérees.
(C.F., XXIV, 242)

On the other hand, the passivity of the stories reinforces the political and social status quo. At no time do Caylus' stories advocate, as do traditional folk stories, the usurping of power by an outsider. The whole point of "Turlou et Rirette," for example, is to emphasise the importance of keeping everyone in his place. Turlou and Rirette are peasant children who are watched over by a

kind fairy; she makes it perfectly clear to them, however, that her bounty towards them will flow only as long as they toe the line of her wishes, and when, after the usual adventures, she allows them to be married, she tells an admonitory story called "L'Histoire de l'oiseau jaune": a fairy is condemned to be transformed for a while and chooses the form of a yellow bird. Just before the term is up, she allows herself to be caught. The bird-catcher, finding the bird extraordinary, takes it to Badi al Zaman who is very rich, and from whom he can expect a large reward. He is delighted with it, especially when he reads on its right wing: "Celui qui mangera ma tête sera roi," and on its left, "Celui qui mangera mon coeur aura, tous les matins, à son lever, cent pièces d'or" (C.F., XXIV, 241).

Having the distrust of the rich for any servant, he takes the bird to the bird-catcher's wife so that she can make it into a stew for him. She, seeing the writing herself, gives the parts in question to her two sons. These flee the town in order to escape the rage of Badi al Zaman, which, needless to say, breaks forth when he discovers that he has been duped. One, indeed, wakes up every morning with a sack of gold beneath his head. Being taken for a rich man, he is set upon by robbers and killed. The other son arrives in a town which is about to choose a ruler who will be revealed by a mysterious sign. A white pigeon settles on his head, and this being taken for the sign, he is made king. Being unused to power, he makes many enemies who finally kill him. The fairy comments:

Cet homme riche et ce roi auroient peut-être été de fort bons oiseleurs, peut-être même d'honnêtes gens, si l'ambition de leur mère ne les avoit pas fait changer d'état.
(C.F., XXIV, 245)

She adds, in case the message has not sunk home:

Je vous ai conté cette histoire ... pour vous dire mon cher Turlou et ma chère Rirette, que les présents que je vous fais de cette maison rustique sont préférables à tous ceux que je pourrais vous faire. (C.F., XXIV, 245)

What greater support for the established order can be imagined?

When it suits his purpose, of course, Caylus can make the higher echelons of the established order look extremely unattractive, so that it will seem to be the reward of virtue not to belong to them.

In "Bleurette et Coquelicot" the court is painted in particularly black colours. Bleurette and Coquelicot are again two children of humble origins who are taken by the fairy Bonnebonne to be raised by her. They attract the attention of the rival fairy, Arganto, who woos them away to her kingdom which is infinitely more sophisticated than Bonnebonne's. There, they are raised to great heights and given the titles of prince and princess. One day, a youth who was brought up with them at the court of Bonnebonne arrives and is astonished to see them thus treated. Because they treat him so disdainfully, he tells the courtiers of their simple background. There follows a great outburst upon the ways of the court:

La cour est un pays où l'on ne pardonne rien, et où les ridicules sont recherchés avec un soin extrême; ainsi, l'on profita de ceux-ci. Les chansons et les épigrammes coururent en un moment; il ne leur fut pas possible même d'en ignorer; car selon la louable coutume des auteurs de ces sortes d'ouvrages, la première copie est adressée à la personne intéressée. (C.F., XXIV, 409)

After the shame of all of this, Bleurette and Coquelicot slink away and find Bonnebonne, who finally takes them back to enjoy the rustic pleasures of her kingdom.

Happiness, therefore, is the end of Caylus' fairy stories as of all fairy stories. It can be equated with wealth and power only if wealth and power are the inherited rights of the people concerned. For happiness is to be achieved only by exact correspondence with the position into which one was born.

It must by now be obvious that Caylus, along with most other writers of fairy stories of his time, has mastered the techniques of the form. Let us look more closely at one story to see how he treats these elements. "La Princesse Lumineuse" has as its basic situation a beautiful princess and a handsome prince who are at first separated from each other by an impediment, but who are finally united in marriage. There is hardly anything very novel about that, but in fact, Caylus treats it in an unusual way. To begin with, the story has an amusing background. The parents of the princess, King Biribi and Queen Marjolaine, are obsessed with gambling, and force this obsession on the rest of the country. As everyone is forced to gamble, and as the proceeds of this gambling go to the state, the economy of the country floats along quite comfortably:

Le roi Biribi dans le fond, n'étoit pas joueur, jamais banquier ne le fut; il n'aimoit que l'argent, et sentoit tout l'avantage de son jeu. Il soulagea son peuple de tous les impôts et de toutes les entrées et ne voulut, pour le revenu de la couronne, que le profit des banques.

(C.F., XXIV, 360)

Now Princess Lumineuse detests all this gambling, so her parents determine to get her out of the court. They arrange therefore, with the help of the bad court fairy Sansdent, and in the absence of Lumineuse's fairy godmother Balsamine, to marry her off to the

king of the Mists. When she returns from her errand, Balsamine finds her languishing in the damp darkness of her foggy court. The heroine of the story is, therefore, out of reach of any prospective hero, not only physically, as in some impregnable tower, but also morally, for the king of the Mists is not a wicked monster, but is well-meaning, merely simply lugubrious. At this point there comes to the court of Biribi the young neighbour prince Grenadin. Sansdent eagerly introduces her to her ugly ward Pivoine who mentions Lumineuse in disparaging tones in order to point out the incomprehensible folly of not enjoying gambling. She bores the prince totally by her insistence upon it--not to mention the vast sums of money he loses at the gaming tables--and he resolves to try and find Lumineuse. He does, in fact, catch a glimpse of her as she tries to get some sunshine at the edge of the mists. These move on, and Grenadin desperately searches for Lumineuse.

Meanwhile the king her husband, in despair at her coldness, becomes ill:

Les médecins conseillèrent au roi de prendre quelquefois un air plus vif que celui qu'il respiroit ordinairement. Il obéit à cette ordonnance, et malheureusement (pour lui, s'entend) il reçut un coup de soleil dont il mourut quelques jours après. (C.F., XXIV, 379)

So the impediment to the union of Lumineuse and Grenadin is removed, but not by any effort on the part of Grenadin. Both parties in this case are passive non-participants in the episode which should have brought glory to Grenadin, and such glory that does accrue from it goes to Lumineuse, for during the illness of her husband:

La reine lui avoit donné tous les soins imaginables; en un mot, ses procédés furent admirables en cette triste occasion, et les brouillards en furent enchantés. (C.F., XXIV, 379)

She then returns to the court of her father, but because she is in mourning, manages to evade the constant gambling, and builds herself a palace on a property some distance from the royal palace. Balsamine brings it about that the banks go bankrupt, so that all gambling has to cease. Biribi is at a loss to know what to do, so it is Lumineuse who establishes an effective government and restores the economy of the country. All the while Grenadin is seeking Lumineuse in the deepest fogs he can find. ("Tout ce que je sais de particulier sur la division de cet état [des brouillards], c'est que la plus grande partie se retira en Angleterre" [C.F., XXIV, 380].) Lumineuse knows this because she has access to Balsamine's magic book in which the past and present can be read, so she sends a small cloud to bring him to her. When he arrives, he finds the country in a very different state from on his last visit. "Quelle joie pour un amant de recevoir en réponse de chaque question, un éloge de ce qu'il aime" (C.F., XXIV, 388). This again is hardly the standard fairy story situation. Here the heroine, who should be inspiring great deeds, is actually performing them, whilst the hero "demanda la permission d'être son premier courtisan" (C.F., XXIV, 388). In this particular story, there is no social message or political import, but by juggling the components of the standard fairy story, Caylus can give us a witty and individual rendering of them.

Even more original than this in the realm of fairy tales is "La Belle Hermine et le Prince Colibri," which, unfortunately,

is only a fragment. The note appended to it in Le Cabinet des fées declares only "on ne sait pas pourquoi l'auteur ne l'a pas achevé." As it breaks off extremely abruptly in mid-sentence, one assumes that it was interrupted by some accident rather than through disinclination on the part of the author; for although the political statement he is making is not, in theory, compatible with fairy stories, in practice Caylus seems to be mixing the elements quite satisfactorily.

The beginning seems rather equivocal in the light of statements Caylus makes elsewhere about passivity. A king, having been ill brought up--"ce qui surprenoit tout le monde, car la mauvaise éducation n'étoit pas autrefois si commune" (C.F., XXIV, 497)--keeps his kingdom in total idleness. This would seem to be a bad thing, but in fact, we cannot be sure quite what Caylus is saying. The idleness of the court is bound up in religion; now, Caylus' impiety was legendary, and was the despair of his devout mother. His attitude to religion is not manifest in his contes, for the most part, but we do have a rare reference to it here, and it is very tongue-in-cheek. The king and the court have themselves transported to the temple on beds:

... et l'on portoit tres-lentement dans la crainte de fatiguer ceux qui étoient dans les lits. (C.F., XXIV, 502)

The lower classes do not have the same advantages as the others, obviously, but concessions are made to them:

... le peuple que l'on plaignoit de ne pouvoir jouir d'une pareille commodité, trouvoit des lits dans le temple sur lesquelles ils assistoient aux prières, l'attitude la plus commode étant en ce pays la plus dévote. (C.F., XXIV, 502)

The virtue of this passive court is brought out when Birette, who comes from another country, and who is servant to Hermine, tells of the wonders her father has seen on his travels:

Un des courtisans qui avoient le plus d'esprit dit au roi, un jour que Birette avoit prononcé le mot de guerre, et qu'il se l'étoit fait expliquer: jamais il n'y a rien eu, poursuivit-il, de plus opposé à la raison et à l'humanité. La valeur n'est qu'une brutalité contraire à l'envie de se conserver. On veut en vain lui donner le nom de vertu, car les mêmes hommes qui l'admettent et qui la révèrent, sont obligés de dire qu'elle doit être accompagnée de la générosité qui veut que l'on pardonne à son ennemi et que, par exemple, on ne le tue point à terre; n'est-il pas plus simple de n'avoir point d'ennemi, et de n'avoir aucune envie de détruire son semblable? Pourquoi ne pas commencer par être généreux, sans faire usage de la valeur? (C.F., XXIV, 503-04)

If these sentiments place Caylus firmly in the eighteenth century, how much more so do his descriptions of the land of the Pallantins, to which the good fairy conducts Hermine during the course of her educational travels. All is clean and simple:

... le luxe ne pouvoit s'introduire dans un pays dont on avoit banni la propriété, et les tristes idées du tien et du mien. (C.F., XXIV, 507)

These Rousseauesque terms make us wish for more, and make us want to know what Caylus meant to do with such inflammatory material.

There is one detail in Caylus' stories which gives him an affinity with Hamilton, and which was perhaps common to all writers in this genre, that is an interest in the names of their characters. Caylus obviously hopes to give a sense of universality to the people in his stories. In most of them there is a name which has a significance beyond itself, as it were. In "Bleuette et Coquelicot" we have a double example of this kind of thing. At the beginning of the story, the author says, speaking of his heroine:

. . . c'est à sa rare beauté que nous devons cette expression de parler, encore usitée dans le langage familier, où pour parler de ce qui nous a ébloui, l'on dit, j'ai vu des Bleuettes. (C.F., XXIV, 394)

And at the end of the tale, of them both:

Bonnebonne donna leurs noms à des fleurs champêtres,
dans le dessein de rendre leurs noms immortels.
(C.F., XXIV, 414)

In "Le Prince Courtebotte et la Princesse Zibeline," the princess gives Courtebotte a fur coat when he has to journey to the Arctic wastes:

. . . et Courtebotte en reconnoissance de la fourrure de martre, dont la princesse lui avoit fait présent pour son voyage, donna le nom de Zibeline aux plus belles martres, pour les distinguer des autres; et ce surnom s'est transmis jusqu'à nous. (C.F., XXIV, 178)

It is clear that although Caylus was latching on to a taste which was to some extent outmoded by his day, he was well aware of the new currents of thought which were affecting his contemporaries, and could incorporate them successfully into a much older form.

It is also clear that Caylus represents the most light-hearted and also the most light-headed aspect of the fairy stories. If the fragment we have of "La Belle Hermine et le Prince Colibris" is an indication of the possibilities Caylus observed in the fairy story--that is to say, as a vehicle for the ideas that were being discussed by him and his friends, and which, as Rousseau was one of the latter must surely have included the ideas on property and freedom--then we are never to know how he would have worked them out. As it is, the indolence which he advocates in most of the stories seems to pervade his writing of them, too. It is significant that the message which

presumably to be put across in the unfinished tale is never transmitted completely; any message contained in the other, finished stories, is of minimal import; such satire as we find therein is limited to scenes of courtly dissipation or of tattle-tale females, but both presented with little energy. One has the impression that Caylus was borne along by his friends into the stream of fairy-tale composition, but that his true interest lay elsewhere, and that it was his antiquities which really preoccupied him. What this goes to show, however, is that writing fairy stories was a very fashionable pastime in certain circles, and that one was meant to produce some wherever one's interests truly lay.

CHAPTER VIII

DUCLOS

In the same breath as Caylus should be mentioned Duclos and Coypel, as the triumvirate together contributed to the mode of the fairy story, and added a dimension to the genre. All three belonged to the salon which was presided over by Mlle de Quinault, and all three were illustrious in fields other than literary. Caylus, we have already noted, had achieved success as an antiquarian and engraver. The name of Coypel had been renowned in the art world for several generations, and Charles-Antoine, who is the member of the family in question here, became premier peintre du Roi in 1747, five years before he died. Duclos was secretary of the Académie Française, novelist, historian, mayor of Dinan and Député du Tiers aux Etats de Bretagne. For these three, therefore, writing fairy tales must have been some kind of light distraction; notwithstanding, they managed to incorporate into the best of them some fairly profound speculations even as Diderot did in Les Deux Amis de Bourbonne, which he, too, tossed off as a kind of salon amusement.

The talents displayed by Duclos and Coypel in the single example by each of them that we have in Le Cabinet des fées are very disparate. Coypel's story, "Aglaë and Nabotine," reveals the heavy

hand of the moralist, and reads unfortunately like the nauseating bridge passages in Madame Le Prince de Beaumont's Le Magasin des enfants, which we shall have cause to mention in greater detail later; whereas in "Acajou et Zirphile" we recognize from the tightly constructed, aphoristic style of Duclos the gifts of a writer of no little distinction.

It seems that both Duclos and Caylus, as well as their friend l'abbé Voisenon, each wrote a story to illustrate a series of drawings by Boucher. Duclos' was the only one of the three to be published. The remark made to him by Montesquieu after the publication of his Considérations sur les mœurs de ce siècle in 1751, seven years after the composition of "Acajou et Zirphile," could well be applied to it:

Vous avez bien de l'esprit et dites de bien belles choses. On dira que Labruiere et vous connoissez bien votre siècle; que vous êtes plus philosophe que luy et que votre siècle est plus philosophe que le sien; quoy qu'il en soit, vous êtes agréable à lire et vous faites penser.¹

The reason for this comparison is made clear at the outset of "Acajou et Zirphile," which begins thus:

L'esprit ne vaut pas toujours autant qu'on le prise, l'amour est un bon précepteur, la providence fait bien ce qu'elle fait; c'est le but moral de ce conte; il est bon d'en avertir le lecteur de peur qu'il ne s'y méprenne. Les esprits bornés ne doutent jamais de l'intention de l'auteur, ceux qui sont trop vifs l'exagèrent; mais ni les uns ni les autres n'aiment les réflexions.
(C.F., XXXV, 21)

Duclos' penchant for maxims is immediately apparent, and, in her book which is devoted exclusively to this aspect of Duclos, Bette Gross Silverblatt makes a list of the maxims which appear in "Acajou et Zirphile," and her list contains no less than forty-nine

entries. We recognize also a mordancy similar to that of La Rochefoucauld, which must have sprung from personal experience. In his introduction to his edition of L'Histoire de Madame de Luz, Jacques Brengues comments that three years spent frequenting the salons of Rennes in his native Brittany inspired Duclos with "une profonde aversion pour les singeries de salon et un goût marqué pour la sobriété dans la tenue vestimentaire."² The former characteristic permeates the whole of our story; the second is underlined thus in a description of the preparations for the marriage of Acajou and Zirphile:

On n'attendoit que les rois d'Acajou et de Minutie pour célébrer le mariage; leurs ambassadeurs étoient arrivés, et avoient tout réglé: les livrées étoient faites; on finissoit les habits; il n'y manquoit pas un pompon; on avoit fait venir les dernières modes de Paris, de chez Chapt sur des poupées de la grandeur de Ninette. En un mot, tout l'essentiel étoit prêt; il ne restoit plus à régler que ce qui regardoit les lois des deux états, et l'intérêt des peuples. (C.F., XXV, 47)

This single quotation gives us some idea of the very Voltairean twist which Duclos, like Caylus, is able to produce when speaking of contemporary society; this would lead us to imagine that the salons of the eighteenth century served as a whetstone for sharpening the wit of the intelligent observer, and these three pairs of penetrating eyes saw the same things and remarked on them in a very similar idiom.

Lest it be imagined that "Acajou et Zirphile" is some heavy moral treatise, let the reader be assured that it is, in fact, a rather charming story in which the last of the wicked fairies, Harpagine and Podagrambo, having been told that the species can be perpetuated only if a mortal falls in love with them, each fixes

upon a human child whom they plan to make their own. Harpagine brings Acajou to her court when he is a baby, so that, knowing only her, he will not be in any position to make unfavourable comparisons, and will therefore be happy to marry her. Her power over him is to last only until he is seventeen. Just before he reaches that age, however, he meets and falls in love with Zirphile, who is being brought up by the fairy Ninette in a neighbouring garden. Harpagine and Podagrambo fly into a rage and Podagrambo tries to carry off Zirphile. Ninette saves the situation by sending Zirphile's head to the Pays des Idées, and, on the insistence of Acajou, who fears its misuse, by surrounding her body with a barrier of flame, penetrable only by the man who can restore her head to her. Acajou sets off in search of the head but is told that he can only take hold of it with a pair of magic hands which dance in the air above his head, and constantly elude his grasp. Weary of this endless exercise, he casts around for some kind of refreshment, and eats a bunch of grapes. These change his disposition completely, and he returns to Ninette's court to indulge in a life of total debauchery. Ninette finally decides that Zirphile cannot remain in her headless state, so sends off two ladies of the court to seek the magic pot wherein lies the power of the wicked fairies, and which can only be taken by a lady of completely pure virtue. The two in question turn out to be ill-qualified for the task, and manage merely to crack the pot.

Ninette restores Acajou to his former disposition with some magic fruit, and he succeeds in getting Zirphile's head. As he

is fleeing with it, he seeks shelter from a storm in the cottage of an old woman. He pretends to be a potter's apprentice, whereupon she gives him a cracked chamber pot to mend. As he had earlier resolved to destroy all such, he smashes this one against a wall. It is, of course, the magic pot, and the power of the wicked fairies is immediately destroyed. He restores Zirphile's head to her body and all ends happily.

In the process of telling this rather complicated story, Duclos manages to hit a large number of targets in contemporary society, usually by the Voltairean technique of juxtaposing the norm and the excess, and reversing their positions. There is a splendid account of the education of the prince, whose native wit Harpagine tries to stifle with atrocious schooling:

Lorsque le prince fut un peu plus grand, la fée manda les maîtres de tous côtés; et, comme en fait de méchanceté elle ne restait jamais dans le médiocre, elle changea tous les objets de ses maîtres. Elle fit venir un fameux philosophe, le Descartes ou le Newton de ce temps-là, pour montrer au prince à monter à cheval et à tirer des armes; elle chargea un musicien, un maître à danser, et un poète lyrique de lui apprendre à raisonner; les autres furent distribués suivant ce plan, et ils en firent autant moins de difficulté, que tous se piquent particulièrement de ce qui n'est pas de leur profession. Qu'il y a des gens qui feroient croire qu'on a pris les mêmes soins pour leur éducation! (C.F., XXXV, 30)

Social attitudes are wonderfully satirized. Ninette's court is described thus:

La cour de la petite fée rassembloit tout ce qu'il y avoit de gens aimables dans le royaume de Minutie. Les jours qu'elle tenoit appartement, rien n'étoit si brillant que la conversation. Ce n'étoit point de ces discours où il n'y a que du sens commun, c'étoit un torrent de saillies, tout le monde interrogeoit, personne ne répondoit juste, et l'on s'entendoit à mer-

veille, ou l'on ne s'entendoit pas, ce qui revient au même pour les esprits brillants; l'exagération étoit la figure favorite et à la mode: sans avoir de sentiments vifs, sans être occupé d'objets importants, on en parloit toujours le langage; on étoit furieux d'un changement de temps; un ruban ou un pompon étoit la seule chose qu'on aimoit au monde; entre les nuances d'une même couleur, on trouvoit un monde de différence; on épuisoit les expressions outrées sur les bagatelles, de façon que, si par hasard on venoit à éprouver quelques passions violentes, on ne pouvoit se faire entendre, et l'on étoit réduit à garder le silence; ce qui donne occasion au proverbe: Les grandes passions sont muettes. (C.F., XXXV, 31-32)

This is in the same honoured tradition as La Bruyère and Montesquieu.

In a similar vein is the reaction of the court when Zirphile falls in love with Acajou, for it is at that moment that she becomes free of the curse of silliness which Harpagine had laid upon her:

... lorsqu'il fut bien avéré que les coeurs de ces amans étoient fermés à tout autre sentiment qu'à leur amour, il fut généralement décidé que Zirphile étoit encore plus sotté depuis qu'elle aimoit, qu'elle ne l'étoit auparavant; que la beauté d'Acajou étoit sans physionomie, qu'elle n'avoit rien de piquant, que leur amour étoit aussi ridicule que nouveau à la cour, et que cela ne faisoit pas une société. (C.F., XXXV, 46)

This is also a good example of the Voltairean effect of reversing the normal opinion of things in order to bring about a satiric effect, and which is, of course, the very stuff that good satire is made of. A further social ill we all recognise is the one which transforms Acajou in the Pays des Idées. He has just eaten a bunch of grapes:

A peine en eut-il goûté qu'il sentit en lui une révolution extraordinaire; son esprit augmentait de vivacité, et son coeur devenoit plus tranquille. Son imagination s'enflammant de plus en plus, tous les objets s'y peignoient avec feu, passoient avec rapidité, et, s'effaçoient les uns les autres; de façon que, n'ayant pas le temps de les comparer, il étoit absolument hors d'état de les juger: en un mot, il devient fou. (C.F., XXXV, 58-59)

The reaction of the court to Acajou's new state is predictably contrary:

On s'attendoit à ne trouver qu'un prince sage et modeste
... mais on en conçut bientôt une idée plus avantageuse.
(C.F., XXXV, 60)

In these circumstances, he accomplishes the debauch of most of the ladies with minimal difficulty:

Il n'étoit occupé que d'en étendre la liste, toutes
s'empessoient de s'y faire inscrire, et ne le trou-
voit aimable que depuis qu'il étoit incapable d'aimer.
(C.F., XXXV, 62)

The normal process of seduction ceases to satisfy him after a while:

Après avoir eu un assez grand nombre de femmes célèbres
pour se mettre en crédit, il resolut d'en séduire quel-
ques-unes, uniquement pour leur faire perdre la réputa-
tion de vertu qu'elles avoient. S'il apprenoit qu'il y
eût une femme tendrement aimée d'un époux chéri, elle
devenoit aussi-tôt l'objet de ses soins, et tel étoit
le travers qu'inspire le titre d'homme à la mode, qu'il
réussissoit par tout ce qui auroit dû le faire échouer.
(C.F., XXXV, 62)

We are reminded of an encounter in Lettre 48 of the Lettres persanes in which Usbek describes an encounter with a man of very similar ilk, whose sole employ is to "faire enrager un mari, ou désespérer un père."³ We also recognise a precursor of Valmont whose chief quarry in Les Liaisons dangereuses is the faithful and virtuous Présidente. This kind of character must have been the subject of discussion sometimes at the Académie de ces Messieurs, a brilliant group of literati presided over by the comte de Maurepas, and whose number included Caylus, Montesquieu and Duclos.

An explanation of the origins of the perverseness of society, which occurs in our text when Harpagine first tries to pervert Acajou, still a baby, could well be penned by one of Montesquieu's

Persians:

Elle composa deux boules de sucre magique; dans l'une il y avoit des pastilles dont la vertu étoit d'inspirer le mauvais goût, et de rendre l'esprit faux; l'autre enfermoit des dragées de présomption et d'opiniâtreté: celui qui en mangeroit devoit toujours juger faux, raisonner de travers, soutenir son sentiment avec opiniâtreté, et donner dans tous les ridicules....

Elle les donna à un voyageur comme une curiosité très-précieuse, en y ajoutant la vertu de se multiplier. Celui qui les reçut les apporta en Europe, où elles eurent un succès brillant. Ce furent les premières dragées qu'on y vit. Tout le monde en voulut avoir; on se les envoyoit en présent; chacun en portoit sur soi dans de petites boîtes; on se les offroit par galanterie, et cet usage s'est conservé jusqu'aujourd'hui.

(C.F., XXXV, 27)

If the evils of society are thus delineated, conversely we have a glimpse of purity in that scene, which in the whole of the Cabinet des fées most nearly approaches eroticism; there is a touching moment when Acajou and Zirphile, who are walking in neighbouring gardens, have their first encounter:

Ils restent quelque-tems immobiles; ils sont saisis d'un tremblement que la nouveauté du plaisir porte à des sens neufs. Ils se touchent, ils gardent le silence; ils laissent cependant échapper quelques mots mal articulés.... Acajou, qui avoit de trop bonnes intentions pour imaginer que les caresses puissent offenser personne, redoubloit les siennes, et Zirphile les lui rendoit naïvement; n'ayant pas la moindre idée du vice, elle ne pouvoit pas avoir de pudeur. (C.F., XXXV, 38-39)

They continue in this way until we imagine that they have tasted the complete joys of love, but Duclos ends the scene piously:

Ils jouissoient de toutes les beautés qu'ils voyaient; ils ne s'imaginoient pas qu'il y en eût de cachées d'où dépendoit le dernier période de bonheur. Il me semble cependant qu'ils n'ont pas mal profité d'une première leçon. (C.F., XXXV, 39)

The affair of the magic pot allows Duclos to reveal a sense of humour of a more bawdy kind than we see elsewhere in Le Cabinet des

fées, and it also provides an amusing way to direct some sharp criticism against intellectual fashions. When the two ladies go in search of the pot they see:

... sur une table de marbre un vase dont la forme n'étoit pas recommandable, il ressembloit même à un pot de chambre. Je suis fâché de n'avoir pas un terme ou une image plus noble. (C.F., XXXV, 52)

Duclos continues with the very neatly turned attack on would-be thinkers:

Si la forme du vase étoit vile, la vertu en étoit admirable; il rendoit les oracles, et raisonnaît sur tout comme un philosophe; c'étoit alors un très-grand éloge de lui être comparé pour le raisonnement. (C.F., XXXV, 52)

On another occasion, Duclos criticizes the same kind of phenomenon, but this time he is more specific, and he gives us a portrait in the tradition of Trissotin in Les Femmes savantes:

Il est vrai que pour éviter un certain pédantisme que donne souvent l'étude, on avoit imaginé le secret d'être savant sans étudier. Chaque femme avoit son géomètre ou son bel esprit, comme elles avoient autrefois un épagneul. Acajou suivant ce plan, donna à corps perdu dans toutes les parties des sciences et de la littérature. Il parloit physique et géométrie. Il faisoit des dissertation metaphysiques, des vers, des contes, des comédies et des opéra. Ce prince excitoit une admiration générale. On prétendoit que les auteurs de profession n'en approchoient pas. On sait qu'il n'y a que les gens d'une certaine façon qui ayent ce qui s'appelle le bon ton, supérieur à tout le génie du monde, et le tout sans prétentions.

Rien n'étoit comparable au sort d'Acajou; on fit même un recueil de ses bons mots dont tout le monde faisoit sa lecture favorite, il étoit intitulé: Le parfait persifleur; ouvrage très-utile à la cour, et propre à rendre un jeune homme brillant et insupportable. (C.F., XXXV, 63)

We have the impression here that this is a caricature sketched from life, and that this kind of person must have been all too familiar to the fastidious Duclos.

The uses to which the fairy story is put among his contemporaries comes under attack:

[Harpagine] ordonna aux gouverneurs du petit prince de ne lui parler que de revenans, de fantômes, de la grande bête, et de lui lire les contes des fées pour lui remplir la tête de mille fadaïses. On a conservé de nos jours par sottise ce que la fée avoit inventé par malice.

(C.F., XXXV, 30)

(We shall have occasion when we discuss "La Belle et la bête" to see that the tide of literary opinion has turned against Duclos in this particular. Experts in all areas of child study would today read this without irony.) He quite justifiably, however, mocks the over-use of the story-within-a-story technique imported from the Orient, and which we have mentioned so often. Zirphile explains to Acajou how he can find the enchanted hands with which he must take hold of her head:

Vous les trouverez ... dans le parc où elles voltigent, ce sont celles de la Fée Nonchalante, qui en a été privée, parce qu'elle ne savoit qu'en faire; je vais vous raconter l'histoire. Il y avoit autrefois.... Oh! parbleu, interrompit impatientement Acajou, je n'ai pas le temps d'entendre des contes; pourvu que j'aye les mains, je m'embarasse peu de leur histoire. (C.F., XXXV, 57)

At the same time we note, however, that Duclos is more than ready to use some of the other devices of the oriental tale when it suits his purpose. This is very obvious in his use of exotic names, the initial Z of Zirphile being an immediate indication of exoticism. The fact that the names of the two lovers begin with the first and last letters of the alphabet respectively give a talismanic effect to the story, and we have the impression of their holding everything encompassed in a mystical embrace.

A further folk theme, that of the myth, is used by Duclos for comic and satiric effect, as he adapts it to extremely trivial things. The first of these is the spectacles which Ninette sometimes wore, and which are explained thus:

La vertu des lunettes étoient, en affaiblissant la vue, de tempérer la vivacité de l'esprit par relation de l'âme et du corps. Voilà la première invention des lunettes; on les a depuis employées pour un usage tout opposé: et c'est ainsi qu'on abuse de tout. Ce qui prouve cependant combien les lunettes nuisent à l'esprit, c'est de voir que de vieux surveillans sont tous les jours trompés par de jeunes amans sans expérience, et l'on ne peut s'en prendre qu'aux lunettes.

(C.F., XXXV, 28)

The same paradoxical situation arises in the case of Ninette's crutches: "à l'égard de la béquille, elle servoit à rendre la démarche plus sûre en la ralentissant" (C.F., XXXV, 28). Which, of course, is the reverse of what we would normally expect crutches to do, as people normally use them who would walk more slowly without them.

As befits the satirist, Duclos sometimes steps out of his role as narrator in order to address the reader directly. The best example of this occurs in the description of the fruits which are found in Ninette's garden; it is worth quoting the passage at length, because Duclos lists, in a light-hearted way, things which he abhors, and which allow us to see how clearly he saw the vices of his age:

Les uns faisoient perdre l'esprit du jeu, si funeste; les autres l'esprit de contradiction, si incommode dans la société; ceux-ci l'esprit de domination, si insupportable; ceux-là l'esprit des affaires, si utile à ceux qui le possèdent et si assommant pour les autres; plusieurs, enfin, l'esprit satyrique, si amusant et si détesté; son opposé, plus dangereux encore, l'esprit de complaisance et de flatterie. On ne voit point de ces

excellens fruits dans nos desserts. C'est bien dommage que ce jardin ne soit pas ouvert à tous les mauvais esprits, ils en reviendroient plus aimables, sans être plus sots qu'ils ne le sont. J'y enverrois d'abord.... Il manque ici un cahier plus considérable que tout le reste de l'Ouvrage: si le Lecteur le regrette, il peut y suppléer en commençant par lui-même. (C.F., XXXV, 67)

So much for the aphoristic style of this conte, and for Duclos' pithy satire. He illustrates admirably that the length of the short story is ideal for this kind of activity which is witty and to the point. In addition, Duclos is making statements of a general nature about the conflicts of mind and body and about freedom and commitment. Although he at no time departs from the charming lightness which delights us in this story, we recognise, nevertheless, the author of L'Histoire de Louis XI who had to suffer no little public chastisement for the expression of his opinions. We recognize in these particulars, a kindred spirit to Jean-Jacques who similarly indulged, for a moment, in a light-hearted expression of his opinions.

CHAPTER IX

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Whereas one can look at the conteurs we have been examining hitherto with a fairly cool gaze, their relative obscurity making them easy prey for the critic's pen, how is one to look at no less a person than J.-J. Rousseau in this context? The answer lies, first, in the obscurity of "La Reine Fantasque," secondly in the unusual glimpse it gives us of Jean-Jacques himself, and thirdly, that, being the only conte philosophique properly speaking in this collection, it can show us how the fairy story can be manipulated in this way.

That this would be the choice of the editor of Le Cabinet des fées for inclusion is not surprising. It is like the stories of Caylus and Duclos in that it owes its genesis in part to La Société du Bout du Banc. Along with the other distinguished writers who gathered around Mlle Quinault in her salon, Rousseau took up the challenge of the fairy story; unlike the others, however, he set himself certain conditions which were dear to the heart of our editor, and which are described thus:

Comme il ne vouloit pas que sa plume devînt libre ni libertine, il se priva de toutes les ressources dont les autres disposaient à leur fantaisie, et prétendit qu'il étoit possible de faire un conte gai, sans polissonerie, sans équivoque, sans amour, sans allu-

sion, sans mots graveleux: de là cette Reine Fantasque,¹
qui remplit toutes les conditions qu'il s'était imposées.

It is certain that Rousseau saw this as a light-hearted enterprise, and of little literary value. In a letter to a M. Vernes dated March 28th, 1756 he remarked:

J'avois fait quelque chose que je vous destinois, mais ce qui vous surprendra fort c'est que cela s'est trouvé si gai et si fou qu'il n'y a nul moyen de l'employer, et qu'il faut le réserver pour le lire le long de l'Arve avec son ami.²

It has been generally supposed that it is to "La Reine Fantasque" that he was referring, and the first small edition appeared in 1758. This edition must have had small currency, as he professed surprise that Mme Dupin would even have heard of it when she expressed a desire to see it in 1759. At that point he wrote of it in more disparaging terms than he had done to M. Vernes:

C'est une folie de cinq ou six pages, qui, bien qu'écrite dans un moment de gaité ou plutôt d'extravagance, n'a pas même le mérite d'être plaisante et qui, en vérité ne peut être lue par une personne de bon sens. ...Je n'en ai gardé que le brouillon, que je n'ai pas même daigné recopier.³

We discover that Rousseau had not completely suppressed all memory of this "folie"--or is it that, even if he felt it was unsuitable for the eyes of a Mme Dupin, it might still have some merit in a more bucolic context than a sophisticated Parisian salon? In Musset-Pathay's book we read the letter of a certain Genevan minister who, together with two other fellow citizens, paid a visit to Jean-Jacques in October 1762. Throughout the visit Rousseau was extremely hospitable, and very good company. M. Mouchon wrote to his wife:

Tu n'as pas idée combien son commerce est charmant; quelle politesse bien entendue dans les manières; quel fonds de

sérénité et de gaité dans sa conversation; ne t'attendais-tu un portrait tout différent? Ne te figurais-tu un homme bizarre, toujours grave et même quelquefois brusque? Ah! quelle distance de là à son vrai caractère!⁴

The account is taken up by M. Mouchon's brother; the latter goes on to describe an evening scene in the kitchen:

Comme il avait désiré que ses hôtes vinssent tous les jours partager son frugal repas, refusant lui-même constamment leurs invitations à leur auberge, il lui vint un soir, avant souper, l'idée de leur imposer, ainsi qu'à lui-même, selon l'ancien usage, la tâche de tourner, chacun à son tour, au coin du feu, la broche du rôti, en y joignant de plus l'obligation de réciter, pendant ce temps-là, quelque joli conte, fable ou historiette. Lorsque son tour fut venu il paya son contingent par sa Reine Fantasque, conte charmant, alors inédit et d'un intérêt tout nouveau pour eux. Hamilton, avec lequel il rivalise, n'a rien fait qui lui soit supérieur pour la grâce et pour l'enjouement.⁵

It is interesting to speculate upon the form this oral recital of the tale might have taken. The version which appears in Le Cabinet des fées is taken from the manuscript itself as it has all the manuscript words which were later corrected for the edition of 1758. In fact there is a small error in the "Notes" of the Pléiade edition of Rousseau's works. The editor quotes a sentence of the manuscript and says: "Le manuscrit ajoute ce texte qu'aucune édition n'a reproduit."⁶ In fact, the sentence in question does occur in Le Cabinet des fées.

The edition of 1758 has as its title La Reine Fantasque, conte cacouac. This is a very nice parody of the fashion for subtitling stories "contes péruviens," or "contes chinois" or whatever, as the word could easily be heard as the name of an obscure tribe of American Indians or Amazonian pygmies. As it is, however, the word is the

nickname given to the Encyclopédistes in an article by J.-N. Moreau in Le Mercure de France of 1757 (see appendix II). The story was preceded by the following "Avertissement":

Ceux qui sont déjà au fait de la doctrine des CACOUACS, et des moyens dont ils se servent pour la répandre, auront d'abord la clef de ce petit Ouvrage. Ils verront avec étonnement jusqu'à quel point d'audace osent insensiblement parvenir des particuliers qui voudroient ensevelir les Lois, les Moeurs et la Religion, dans le même tombeau. Des Contes de l'ordre de celui-ci ne sont pas des Contes d'enfant; ce sont des pièges qu'on tend au genre humain pour le tirer de la seule voye où il peut trouver son repos et son bonheur. Mais en vérité on le fait si maladroitement que de pareils écrits portent avec eux leur réfutation et leur condamnation. Il est bon, cependant, qu'ils soient mis au grand jour, pour achever de démasquer ceux qui depuis longtemps s'enveloppent du manteau d'une fausse Philosophie, et prennent toutes sortes de déguisements pour arriver à leurs fins.

The import of this "Avertissement" mitigates to some extent the light-heartedness of the intent expressed elsewhere. Rousseau felt obliged to make it into some kind of polemic, by using the Mercure article as a touchstone, and after actually writing it in a carefree vein, he now has to give it some relevance to contemporary attitudes of the philosophes. This is in keeping with the otherwise rather curious use of the word employer used of the story in the letter to M. Vernes. Writing for Rousseau is either a polemical weapon or a therapeutic exercise; writing for fun, which was very much an accepted activity of La Société du Bout du Banc, does not sit well with him. He thinks of himself, and is known to others, as an intellectual and moral heavyweight, and he expects everyone to be surprised that this piece of fluff has come from his pen, as he intimates to M. Vernes and Mme Dupin; and we see from the reaction of M. Mouchon to the gaiety of his mood that this expectation is

perfectly justified. That he should impose some strictures upon himself is not surprising, and constitutes a discipline for himself; the "Avertissement" is a sign that however lightly we may choose to take it, there is going to be some meat in it.

What the meat consists of, largely, is a witty, pithy exploitation of the conflict of the duality good/bad or reason/unreason, but instead of any kind of philosophic ruefulness about the pervasiveness of evil, we have a happy ending in which good triumphs. In addition--and this is what gives it its place in Le Cabinet des fées--we have the clever exploitation of the traditional levels of tale-telling--that is to say the story is recounted by a story-teller, but there is also an interlocutor who interrupts him on appropriate occasions. Rousseau also uses the intervention of a conventional fairy of the fairy-godmother type in "Cendrillon" to bring about the dénouement of the story.

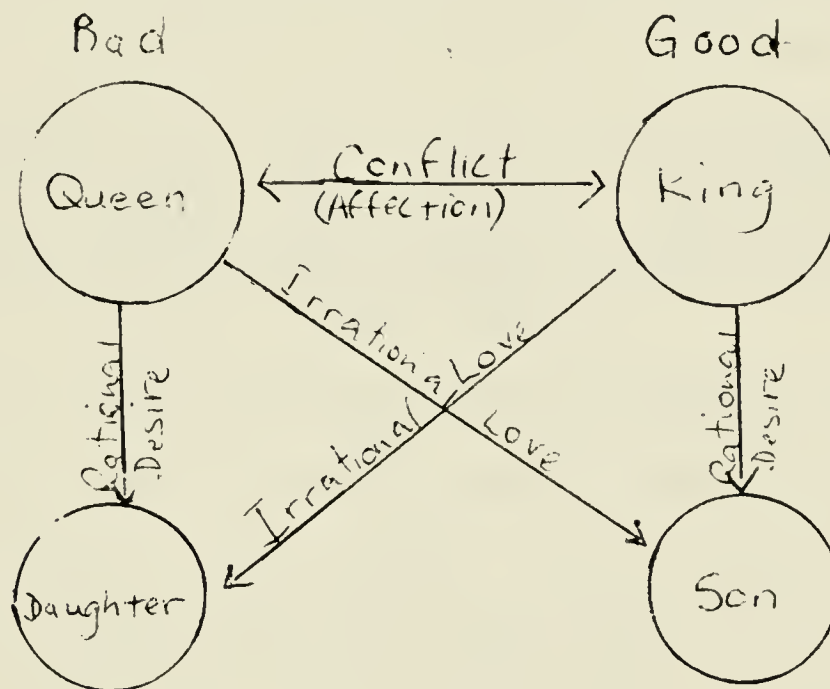
The plot tells of the good and wise King Phénix and his capricious wife Fantasque. Desperate in their childlessness, they consult astrologers and physicians and holy men, and finally the queen becomes pregnant. Knowing that the king wants a son, she decides that she wants a daughter; each parent is assured by the fairy Discrète that the child is to be of the sex each wanted. At this, Fantasque prepares a layette suitable only for a boy so that she can enjoy the discomfiture of her husband and the court when the expected girl is born. The moment of delivery arrives, and the queen gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl, at which point

the queen, "revenue de sa surprise, trouva l'expédient si plaisant, qu'elle fit des éclats de rire dangereux dans l'état ou elle étoit" (C.F., XXVI, 14). Because of the sincere mutual love of the king and queen, each finds himself drawn by deep affection to the child which had originally been desired by the other, so that it is the queen who dotes on her son as Phénix does on his daughter. However, at the moment of the christening, when Discrète has given each parent the right to choose the destiny of the children, they arrive at an impasse: "Phénix vouloit des enfans qui devinssent un jour des gens raisonnables; Fantasque aimoit mieux avoir de jolis enfans, et pourvu qu'ils brillassent à six ans, elle s'embarrassoit fort peu qu'ils fussent des sots à trente" (C.F., XXVI, 19).

Discrète rules that each shall decide the future of the child of his own sex. The king hastily grabs his son, but the queen in a fit of pique declares that she will ask for the child she is holding the opposite of what the king asks for his. She is not to be moved by the entreaties of Phénix and Discrète to change her mind, so Phénix in an agony of frustration blurts out that he wishes the child he is holding to ressembler Fantasque; she in her turn wishes her child to ressembler Phénix. "Voilà donc le futur successeur au trône orné de toutes les perfections d'une jolie femme, et la princesse sa soeur destinée à posséder un jour toutes les vertus d'un honnête-homme, et les qualités d'un bon roi; partage qui ne paroît pas des mieux entendus, mais sur lequel on ne pourroit pas revenir" (C.F., XXVI, 21).

Ah, but that is not so; it turns out that as the babies are identical twins, identically dressed, the king had made a mistake in identity, and the child he had picked up was really the girl, so that the one remaining for Fantasque was her son. Hence it is the girl who is called Caprice and the boy Raison, so that "en dépit des bizarreries de la reine, tout se trouva dans l'ordre naturel" (C.F., XXVI, 25).

The plot can be summarized in the following diagram:



What the diagram shows clearly is that the good and bad remain on their own opposing sides of the dividing line, which is where reason had placed them originally (obviously the king wants a son at the outset because he wants to secure succession through the male line). Contact between the two sides is made only through the forces of unreason, that is to say the emotions, in the irrational love between Phénix and Fantasque and the perverse liking each takes to the child the other had desired; it is these forces which are nearly the undoing of the king. The fact that the forces remain in such good

order, however, is due entirely to the fortuitousness of accident. Arbitrary destiny rules over the affairs of mankind, but that may not be for the worse.

The positive aspect of this point is made in an unemphatic way, but it is pin-pointed by the emphasis on its negative side. This emphasis is brought about by the druid who is the interlocutor of the story-teller, Jalamir. At the point where we imagine that the destiny of the children has been settled once and for all, the druid bursts out with his projected end to the story.

Je devine si bien tout le reste, dit le druide à Jalamir, en l'interrompant, que j'achèverois le conte pour toi. Ton prince Caprice fera tourner la tête à tout le monde et sera trop bien l'imitateur de sa mère pour n'en pas être le tourment. (C.F., XXVI, 22)

This "cacouac" element continues in the outburst of "sophistique éloquence" with which the druid charges Jalamir, and of which he, in fact, provides the only example. He sets up various opposing scenes and uses them with considerable dialectic force. First we have the picture of the unhappy kingdom under the sway of a king whose "seule étourderie, unie à tout son pouvoir, le fera plus haïr que n'auroit fait une méchanceté raisonnée" (C.F., XXVI, 23). On the other hand, we see the image of the princess, who "se fera tellement adorer du peuple, que chacun fera des vœux pour être gouverné par elle" (C.F., XXVI, 23). There then arises the question of interfering with the established order of succession, but the "docteurs" oppose this violently,

... et prouveront qu'il vaut mieux que le peuple obéisse aveuglément aux enragés que le hasard peut lui donner comme maîtres que de se choisir lui-même des chefs raisonnables; que, quoiqu'on interdise à un fou le gouvernement de son propre bien, il est bon de lui laisser la

suprême disposition de nos biens et de nos vies; que le plus insensé des hommes est encore préférable à la plus sage des femmes; et que le mâle ou le premier né fût-il un singe ou un loup, il faudroit en bonne politique qu'une héroïne ou un ange, naissant après lui obéît à ses volontés. (C.F., XXVI, 23-24)

It is a tribute to the possibilities of the fairy story, that Rousseau's republican sentiments are nowhere more clearly expressed than in this paragraph, and that nowhere in his writings does the monarchy get such a drubbing, yet whoever heard of the charges levelled against him for the sentiments expressed in "La Reine Fantasque"?

One might expect from the above that Rousseau was striking a blow for women's liberation, and upholding the cause of feminism; this is not borne out by the rest of the story, in parts which are meant to have a utopian aspect. If we look back to the little diagram of the plot, we find that the males are so perfect that the question of female supremacy does not even arise. Reason, goodness, prudence are all essentially male characteristics, and capriciousness, spite and fecklessness, female. Rousseau does nothing to mitigate this impression when, in speaking of Discreète he says: "le sexe et le nom contrastoient plaisamment dans son caractère." When we come to the end of the story, and destiny takes over, we find that what the natural order actually means is wise rule by good men, and idiotic behaviour by pretty women. Some lip service has been paid to the equality of individuals, but in the last analysis the lesson of Emile is reinforced, and Sophie remains in her naturally inferior position.

This impression is strengthened by the social behaviour of the respective hero and heroine, apart from their political and moral implications. Whereas the king behaves with dignity most of the time (it is a notable exception, justified by unusual emotion, that after the birth of the twins):

... le roi, sortant de sa majesté pour se rendre à la nature, fit des extravagances qu'en d'autres temps il n'eut pas laissé faire à la reine; et le plaisir d'avoir des enfans le rendoit si enfant lui-même, qu'il courut sur son balcon crier à pleine tête: mes amis, réjouissez-vous tous; il vient de me naître un fils et à vous un père, et une fille à ma femme. (C.F., XXVI, 13)

the queen constantly behaves in a most disgraceful way. When she fails to conceive a child:

Il n'y avoit pas un courtisan à qui elle ne demandât étourdiment quelque secret pour en avoir, et qu'elle ne rendît responsable du mauvais succès! (C.F., XXVI, 2)

When she finally succeeds and learns that the king wants a son, she reacts thus:

Mon prince et mon époux ... m'ordonne d'accoucher d'un garçon, et je sais trop bien mon devoir pour manquer d'obéir. Je n'ignore pas que quand sa majesté m'honore des marques de sa tendresse, c'est moins pour l'amour de moi que pour celui de son peuple, dont l'intérêt ne l'occupe guère moins la nuit que le jour; je dois imiter un si noble désintéressement, et je vais demander au divan un mémoire instructif du nombre et du sexe des enfans qui conviennent à la famille royale; mémoire important au bonheur de l'état, sur lequel toute reine doit apprendre à régler sa conduite pendant la nuit.
(C.F., XXVI, 6-7)

Her chief delight at the thought of having a child is this:

Elle ne connoissoit point, disoit-elle, de ravissement pareil à celui d'avoir un enfant à qui elle put donner le fouet tout à son aise dans ses moments de mauvaise humeur. (C.F., XXVI, 4)

An additional fillip is given to her joy by the thought that all the learned lawyers of the land are to be summoned to address the

new baby as soon as it is born. There is some altercation between the king and queen on this point, the king insisting that this will cause the learned men to be held in disrepute. The queen declares, however, that it is better for him to hear these discourses when he is too young to be corrupted by them than to wait for a time when he is more receptive:

Il en fallut passer par là; et, de l'ordre exprès de sa majesté, les présidents du sénat et des académies commencèrent à composer, étudier, raturer, et feuilleter leur Vaumorière et leur Démosthène, pour apprendre à parler à un embryon. (C.F., XXVI, 9)

There is a final aspect of the story which makes it a conte philosophique, an aspect which is a sine qua non of the genre, and that is the obligatory attack on religious bigotry. The subject is brought up at the moment of the baptism of the twins, when Jalamir is interrupted thus by the druid:

... tu me brouilles d'une terrible façon. Apprends-moi, je te prie, en quel lieu nous sommes. D'abord, pour rendre la reine enceinte, tu la promenois parmi des reliques et des capuchons; après cela tu nous a tout à coup fait passer aux Indes; à présent tu viens me parler du baptême, et puis des autels des dieux. Par le grand Thamiramis! je ne sais plus si, dans la cérémonie que tu prépares, nous allons adorer Jupiter, la bonne Vierge ou Mahomet. (C.F., XXVI, 15)

Jalamir is not the slightest bit disconcerted by this, and explains:

... vous devez vous ressouvenir que nous sommes dans un pays des fées, où l'on n'envoie personne en enfer pour le bien de son âme, où l'on ne s'avise point de regarder au prépuce des gens pour les damner ou les absoudre, et où le mitre et le turban vert couvrent également les têtes sacrées, pour servir de signallement aux yeux des sages et de parure à ceux des sots. (C.F., XXVI, 16)

Apart from these considerations of contemporary interest, there is another element to the story which gives it an added

dimension as a conte de fées and which makes us ask ourselves whether Rousseau hit upon it by some happy accident, or whether he was, for whatever reason, deeply conscious of some of the characteristics of folk tales. We know that folk tales are meant to show us some important truths about human relationships. Most of the familiar folk fairy tales with which we have grown up are set in familial situations, and reveal to us something about intimate conflicts and relationships. We can all think of examples of stories which tell of sibling rivalry, or preferential treatment of a favourite child by a parent or step-parent, or the leaving home by a child upon reaching puberty or maturity. In "La Reine Fantasque" we find two aspects of the familial scene illuminated, one of which is relatively familiar, and the other of which seems to be rather original, but which we all recognize, nonetheless, as a common familial situation.

The first idea is that it is the father who is the gentler of the two parents. This is a theme most commonly treated in connection with step-parents, but it is often the case that the female parent is a harpy, and the father the kinder to the children, "Hansel and Gretel" being the example of this that springs to everyone's mind. The second is the idea of a predilection for the child of the opposite sex. The currency in normal speech of the expressions "mamma's boy" and "daddy's girl" indicate that this is a selection which occurs naturally and frequently, yet one is hard put to it to find examples in popular fairy tales. The only documented examples in the standard reference books on the subject are two obscure

examples given by Margarethe Boberg in her catalogue of motifs in Old Icelandic sagas⁸ which it is inconceivable that Rousseau would have known about.

La Reine Fantasque, although certainly among the lesser-known of Rousseau's works, is by no means unworthy of attention. It manages to incorporate many of Rousseau's basic ideas into a very succinct story which keeps nicely within the bounds of its original form, whilst revealing an unusually playful side of the great man himself. One can only regret that he did not exploit further the conte philosophique, which, as we well know, has almost endless possibilities.

CHAPTER X

LA BELLE ET LA BETE

In discussing Duclos and Caylus we have come rather far from any usual concept of "fairy stories." The stories we have just been looking at are addressed exclusively to adult audiences, and their only common ground with the stories of Perrault consists in the introduction of supernatural beings and of magical intervention, and this with the same purpose as the introduction of, for example, Jesrad in Voltaire's Zadig. Let us return now to the Perrault kind of fairy tale and see how it has been treated. For the purpose of such a study, we are fortunate in having two versions of a story which is standard nursery fare, written down by two very different ladies; we know also what audience it was aimed at in each case. The tale in question is "La Belle et la bête," and the version of it which is printed in Le Cabinet des fées is that by Mme de Villeneuve, which was first published in La Jeune Americaine et les contes marins which appeared in 1740. Contrary to one's expectations, the more straightforward, folk-like presentation of the story, written by Mme Le Prince de Beaumont, appeared in Le Magasin des enfants after this in 1758. It is surely Mme de Villeneuve who has embroidered a given tale rather than Mme Le Prince de

Beaumont who has distilled an original-type form from a more prolix version. Or is it that the latter, addressing herself to children, has managed thereby to find the simple expression of a more primitive age in mankind itself and to echo the straightforward language which Perrault heard as a child from some unsophisticated servant? Another question we might ask ourselves is, why is it that it was the longer, more convoluted and less enduring version which the editor of Le Cabinet des fées saw fit to print rather than the version which is now standard, and is considered the expression of a very fundamental folk theme (witness its use by Cocteau in his film of the story, when it was the archetypal situation he was seeking)? The answer to this must be that Mme de Villeneuve was thought to express the better of the two the spirit of the sophisticates who formed the reading public for this kind of material, and who still held ascendance in the literary world when the collecting was done. It is interesting that both writers profess some surprise at the popularity of the genre they write. Mme Le Prince de Beaumont is the more direct. In the "Avertissement" to Le Magasin des enfants she says:

Pleine de défiance du succès, je communiquai mon manuscrit à un grand nombre de personnes. Quelle fut ma surprise! Plusieurs entre elles, dont le goût éprouvé peut servir de règle, m'avouèrent qu'il les avoit assez amusées pour n'avoir pu le quitter avant d'avoir achevé. J'ai voulu travailler pour les enfans, me disois-je, j'ai manqué mon but, puisque les personnes faites s'amusement de mon ouvrage. Cette crainte me fit suspendre l'impression il me falloit d'autres juges, et je les ai cherchés parmi mes écolières de tous les âges. Elles ont toutes lu mon manuscrit. L'enfant de six ans s'en est divertie aussi bien que celles de dix et de quinze. Plusieurs d'entre elles à qui je désespérois de faire naître le goût pour l'étude, ont écouté la lecture avec une avidité qui ne laisse rien à souhaiter, et qui me répond du succès.

Tout le monde convient que la correction des mauvaises habitudes est le principal but de l'éducation. Former les mœurs, tirer parti de l'esprit, l'orner, lui donner une tournure géométrique, régler l'extérieur, sont les maximes sur lesquelles mon ouvrage est basé. S'il est conforme à ces vues, s'il les remplit, il est suffisant pour donner une bonne éducation.

We see here a clear indication that the form has become an adult entertainment; this, in fact, is no surprise by 1759, and Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's expression of astonishment can be attributed only to coyness about her own work. Mme de Villeneuve, who, as we have seen, was writing nearly two decades earlier, already takes cognizance of the popularity of the fairy stories among her peers. The theme of La Jeune Americaine has as its main incident the story of a young girl brought up in France, who is being taken to the new world by her fiancé, and who is accompanied by a chaperone. The chaperone beguiles the voyage by telling stories to the girl. (The telling of stories on a sea voyage was much in vogue in the literature of the period as we know from Candide; there, the old woman says that she would not have told her story "s'il n'était d'usage, dans un vaisseau, de conter des histoires pour se désennuyer."² The fiancé, Doriancourt, is embarrassed when his fiancée suggests that the story-telling sessions be made public, and when this idea is applauded by the captain of the ship, M. de la B. When Doriancourt realises that his view is unfashionable, he is happy to allow himself to be persuaded by M. de la B. "qui sçavoit en habile marin que rien n'est à négliger à la Mer," and who says of the young girl: "Les gens sages mettent à profit la moindre occasion de s'amuser, elle prend le bon parti."³

Despite the fact that the listener-in-chief, as it were, to this story is scarcely more than a child, Mme de Villeneuve takes pains to

make it as adult as possible, and to remove it very far from the world of the simple folk tale. In so doing, she diminishes the force of the essential plot, mainly through the addition of irrelevant details, but in some cases through the suppression of some necessary element.

In her version, the merchant has six children of each sex, rather than three of each, as in Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's version; the reason for this surfeit becomes apparent when she mentions the merchant's need of his great wealth:

S'il avoit des richesses immenses, il avoit aussi beaucoup d'enfans. Sa famille étoit composée de six garçons et de six filles. Aucun n'étoit établi. Les garçons étoient assez jeunes pour ne se point presser. Les filles trop fières des grands biens sur lesquels elles avoient lieu de compter, ne pouvoient aisément se déterminer sur le choix qu'elles avoient à faire. (C.F., XXVI, 29)

Apart from the fact that explanations for sufficiency are superfluous in this context (we need to know why Hansel and Gretel's parents leave them in the forest, but we wouldn't need to know why they are being kept at home in prosperity, for example), this is to miss the essential mystique of the number three in folk literature: the number seven may have important associations, but the number six has none. The great importance given by the Ancients to three as being the first and perfect number (one being a principle and two being a duality) is clearly indicated in the folk literatures of most countries; therefore, whatever psychological expectations are aroused in us for the success of the third child are not satisfied when the number three is exceeded. Mme Le Prince de Beaumont wisely follows the precedent set by "Cupid and Psyche" and "Cinderella."

Mme de Villeneuve gives in to her natural prolixity in the scene where the merchant is lost in the forest; the result of it this time

is that it detracts from, rather than increases (as was presumably the intention) the force of the discovery of the apparently uninhabited castle. The account runs as follows:

... surpris par la nuit, pénétré du froid le plus piquant, et enseveli, pour ainsi dire, sous la neige avec son cheval, ne sachant, enfin, où porter ses pas, il crut toucher à sa dernière heure. Nulle cabane sur sa route, quoique la forêt en fut remplie. Un arbre creusé par la pourriture fut tout ce qu'il trouva de meilleur, trop heureux encore d'avoir pu s'y cacher; cet arbre en le garantissant du froid, lui sauva la vie; et le cheval peu loin de son maître, aperçut un antre creux, où conduit par l'instinct, il se mit à l'abri.

La nuit en cet état lui parut d'une longueur extrême; de plus persécuté par la faim, effrayé par les hurlements des bêtes sauvages, qui passoient sans cesse à ses côtés pouvoit-il être un instant tranquille? Ses peines et ses inquiétudes ne finirent pas avec la nuit. Il n'eut que le plaisir de voir le jour et son embarras fut grand. En voyant la terre extraordinairement couverte de neige, quel chemin pouvait-il prendre? Aucun sentier ne s'offroit à ses yeux, ce ne fut qu'après une longue fatigue et des chutes fréquentes, qu'il put trouver une espèce de route dans laquelle il marcha plus aisément.

En avançant sans le savoir, le hasard conduisit ses pas dans l'avenue d'un très-beau château, que la neige avoit paru respecter.... (C.F., XXVI, 39-40)

This whole episode is quite irrelevant to the plot, but again there is a "rational" element in its introduction. It makes it possible for the merchant's--and our--first glimpse of the castle to be in daylight. This, however, is not nearly as effective or as startling as the night view, with its great illumination. The light in the forest is a motif deeply embedded in the fabric of folk tales; it always introduces an element of suspense, because neither the hero nor we know whether it emanates from a good or an evil source. In this case, of course, it is nicely ambivalent as it is immediately evil for the merchant, but ultimately good for the outcome of the story.

Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's account of this episode is a model of conciseness by comparison, but is nonetheless effective for that:

Il neigeait horriblement, le vent étoit si grand, qu'il le jeta deux fois à bas de son cheval: la nuit étant venue, il pensa qu'il mourroit de faim ou de froid, ou qu'il seroit mangé des loups qu'il entendit hurler autour de lui. Tout d'un coup, en regardant au bout d'une longue allée d'arbres, il vit une grande lumière mais qui paroissoit bien éloignée. Il marcha de ce côté-là et vit que cette lumière sortoit d'un grand palais, qui étoit tout illuminé. (M.E., I, 63)

For some reason, the very specific mention of wolves is much more spine-chilling than "bêtes sauvages" and the sparse description of the effects of the force of the wind on him is quite as evocative as the much lengthier description of the night in the snow.

As for the incident of the rose, which is crucial to the story, as it sets in motion the whole plot, again we find that although Mme de Villeneuve expends many more words on it, she misses the whole point at issue. When the merchant picks the rose, the Beast rushes up roaring:

Qui t'a donné la liberté de cueillir mes roses? N'étoit-ce pas assez que je t'eusse souffert dans mon palais avec tant de bonté? loin d'en avoir la reconnoissance, téméraire, je te vois voler mes fleurs. Ton insolence ne restera pas impunie. (C.F., XXVI, 44)

The detail which is present in Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's version, and which Jacques Barchilon rightly underlines as being very important is as follows:

Vous êtes bien ingrat, lui dit la Bête d'une voix terrible; je vous ai sauvé la vie en vous recevant dans mon château, et pour ma peine vous me volez mes roses, que j'aime mieux que toutes choses au monde [my italics]. (M.E., I, 66)

Barchilon is surely wrong, however, about the attribution of the symbolism⁴; the rose, according to him, stands for the virility of the Beast. Now we have in The Romance of the Rose an early literary example of the rose (especially the red rose, though, of course, no colour is mentioned here) as a symbol of the maidenhead, and so it must be understood here. The Beast can return to his human form only through the voluntary surrendering of the virginity of a young girl who agrees to marry him in his bestial form; if the merchant, who is also the father of Belle, and has primal right to dominance over her, now robs him of this treasure, he will be left without hope of possession of the thing symbolised, and must remain, therefore, forever, in this hideous state. At no point is his virility in question; it is rather only the occasion to use it which is lacking.

There is another aspect of this episode which shows the aesthetic superiority of Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's version. When the Beast appears for the first time, we have no indication whatsoever about his actual external appearance. She says simply: "le marchand vit venir à lui une bête si horrible qu'il fut tout près de s'évanouir" (M.E., I, 65). Mme de Villeneuve's description, on the other hand, runs thus: "il apperçut à ses côtés une horrible bête, qui, d'un air furieux, lui mit sur le cou une espèce de trompe semblable à celle d'un éléphant" (C.F., XXVI, 44). By this evocation of a very exotic animal, Mme de Villeneuve betrays the significance of an important aspect of the tale. In other versions of this motif--and there are many in western literature--the creature which is to wed the

heroine, where it is described at all, always has some form of animal familiar in the area in which the story is told. In Apuleius, Cupid is said to have the form of a snake--though in fact this is only suggested by the wicked sisters, and we never actually see him in this guise; in the Scandinavian story of "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" the girl marries a bear, and in the French folk tale, the hero has been turned into the eponymous Loup blanc. All this would indicate that although the idea of sexual union is terrifying, it is a very familiar terror, and is something which is constantly at hand and all around. Mme de Villeneuve was obviously influenced by the exotic taste of her contemporaries to add this foreign touch to the idea of the unknown. Apart from the fact that we are only able to get some inkling of the unknown with reference to what we know, and, in this case, fear, this detail detracts from the horror of the monster's appearance because it fails to harmonize with whatever mental picture we have of the Beast. Whatever image of him we have in our mind's eye, there is surely no trunk involved!

So, Belle lives in the castle whose only other inhabitant is the Beast, and who comes every night while she is supping to ask the same question. In Mme de Villeneuve's version the question is "Voulez-vous que je couche avec vous?," and in Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's, "La Belle voulez-vous être ma femme?" This discrepancy can be partly explained in that whereas the former had no thought for prudery, the latter was writing primarily for children. In a way, however, each question is equally valid. The significance of each is quite obvious, but very important in the context of fairy stories, and they often merge with one another.

The first is concerned, obviously, with sexual initiation. What this story is all about is the familiarization of Belle with a reality she at first takes to be unbearable until she reaches the point where not only can she tolerate it with pleasure, but it becomes transformed into something beautiful and desirable. Both versions of the story make the point that Belle, finally, far from being dismayed at the prospect of the Beast's daily visits, looks forward to them with pleasure as a welcome moment of communication with some other speaking creature.

As for the second question, it leads to the familiar conclusion of hundreds and hundreds of fairy stories which end with "And they lived happily ever after." The reward for any kind of patience or courage or maturation is that good which is to be sought above all others--namely the assurance of a life-time's companionship and the exclusion of the possibility of loneliness and its accompanying rejection by society, which is the most terrifying of all prospects. In most of the fairy stories we are familiar with, the two issues become merged into one, as the sanction of society is important in the stories of our tradition (or rather, that is how we see things now, and why it is those stories which uphold that order which have been preserved in literary form); it is, therefore most often the case that the initiation is performed by the man who also becomes the husband. (One does not have to look far on library shelves to find tales of joyous copulation which do not end in matrimony, but those remain a sub-genre even in these broad-minded days.)

In order for a happy and satisfying union to take place, however, some kind of transformation must be brought about. The form of possible transformation is discussed in the story which is the paradigmatic case of what we are speaking of, that is to say, Perrault's "Riquet à la houe." In this story, Riquet, who is extremely ugly and deformed, can be made attractive if he can find a woman who will love him so much as to promise herself to him and desire his becoming attractive. The beautiful princess to whom he had already given the gift of intelligence (for he had similar power in that area) pronounces the magic words, and immediately:

Riquet à la Houpe parut à ses yeux l'homme du monde le plus beau, le mieux fait et le plus aimable qu'elle eût jamais vu. Quelques-uns assurent que ce ne furent point les charmes de la fée qui opérèrent, mais que l'amour seul fit cette métamorphose. Ils disent que la princesse, ayant fait réflexion sur la persévérance de son amant, sur sa discrétion, et sur toutes les bonnes qualités de son âme et de son esprit, ne vit plus la difformité de son corps ni la laideur de son visage; que sa bosse ne lui sembla plus que le bon air d'un homme qui fait le gros dos; et qu'au lieu que jusqu'alors elle l'avoit vu boiter effroyablement, elle ne lui trouva plus qu'un certain air penché qui la charmoit. Ils disent encore que ses yeux, qui étoient louches, ne lui en parurent que plus brillants; que leur dérèglement passa dans son esprit pour le marque d'un violent excès de l'amour; et qu'enfin, son gros nez rouge eut pour elle quelque chose de martial et d'héroïque. (C.F., I, 60-61)

The moral of the story is that "Tout est beau dans ce que l'on aime"; it exemplifies the least magical of cases where this is so, as "La Belle et la bête" exemplifies the most magical, though, in fact Mme Le Prince de Beaumont gives us indications of a transformation of the mind in the manner of "Riquet à la houe" before we come to the magical change from the beast to the handsome young man.

Belle says during one of their conversations: "Vous avez bien de la bonté ... je vous avoue que je suis bien contente de votre coeur; quand j'y pense, vous ne me paraissez pas si laid" [my italics] (C.F., I, 74). Already the intuition of Belle is beginning to produce glimmerings of the reward that her recognition of the worth of the Beast is to bring her finally.

This kind of intuition is made unnecessary in Mme de Villeneuve's account because she introduces various external devices into the story to relieve Belle's boredom and suspense--she does so to such an extent, indeed, that we ask ourselves how Belle's stay in the castle can possibly be termed any kind of test. Every night when she goes to sleep, she sees in her dreams a handsome young man who speaks to her tenderly; when she is exploring in the castle, she finds a portrait of him, so that his existence in the flesh is confirmed, and also his association with the castle. She knows, therefore, albeit in an obscure way, that a meeting with him, at least, is possible. This constitutes a dangling of the carrot before both the heroine and the reader which violates the spirit of the form. It is an essential part of the motif that the heroine not know where things are going to lead so that she can be properly tested. One might speculate that this is a concession to a society which does not have much patience with moral testing. Mme Le Prince de Beaumont very properly leaves Belle completely in the dark about her future. The only slight indication she has of it she deduces in a rational way from very concrete evidence. When she is left alone after the departure of her father, and is expecting to be

devoured by the beast that very evening, she discovers a room marked "Appartement de la Belle" which contains a harpsichord and large quantities of music; she reasons: "si je n'avois qu'un jour à demeurer ici, on ne m'auroit pas fait une telle provision" (C.F., I, 72). Apart from this deduction, and the growing realisation that the Beast means her no harm, Belle has no indication of her future happiness.

The most striking example of Mme de Villeneuve's concession to her readers is the difference between what Belle sees in the mirror in her room and what Mme Le Prince de Beaumont's Belle sees. In the latter case, Belle remains the pure, single-minded pious girl she ought to be. When she sees written in her library the words "Souhaitez, commandez, vous êtes ici la reine et la maîtresse" (C.F., I, 72), she can think of nothing to wish for but to see her poor father, who, as she knows, will be grieving for her. "Quelle fut sa surprise, en jetant ses yeux sur un grand miroir, d'y voir sa maison, où son père arrivoit avec un visage extrêmement triste" (C.F., I, 73). This unalloyed virtue is typical of the single-mindedness of the hero or heroine of fairy tales, for although virtue is not necessarily their preserve, undeviating devotion to that one thing which, intentionally or otherwise, is going to bring about the satisfactory resolution of the story, is. In this case, it is Belle's constant concern for her father and her pursuit of music and literature which make it evident that she is steadfast and self-reliant, and strong enough to pass the test of the castle.

Mme de Villeneuve's Belle, on the other hand, is provided with all the accoutrements of the society which was reading about

her, and which are enumerated in some detail. When she goes to bed for the first time in the castle, her bedtime chocolate appears magically on the bedside table. The first distraction offered to her consists of an aviary which contains birds which entertain and caress her. As she explores further, she finds yet more birds, this time parrots, who speak to her and sing her arias from operas. At this point we are told: "elle fut fort aise de trouver à qui parler, car le silence pour elle n'étoit pas un bonheur" (C.F., XXVI, 77). Next she comes across a troupe of monkeys who amuse her and take her to a table where they wait upon her. After the meal, another troupe puts on a play. Her life continues thus for some days; finally, she goes into a room she has visited only infrequently, and, trying to get some daylight into it, she finds a window that seems to open on to darkness.

En rêvant à quoi ce lieu pouvoit être destiné, une vive clarté vint tout d'un coup l'éblouir. On leva la toile, et la Belle découvrit un théâtre des mieux illuminés. Sur les gradins et dans les loges elle vit tout ce que l'on peut voir de mieux fait et de plus beau dans l'un et l'autre sexe. (C.F., XXVI, 80)

On succeeding occasions, this place becomes a playhouse for tragedy, comedy and burlesque, so she has constant, changing entertainment. At these performances, "ravie de voir des figures humaines, dont plusieurs étoient de sa connaissance, c'eût été pour elle un grand plaisir de leur parler, et de s'en faire attendre" (C.F., XXVI, 87). And in this way, she keeps up with the fortunes of the world without being part of it:

Elle avoit en ses fenêtres des sources intarissables de nouveaux amusemens. Les trois autres lui donnoient, l'une le plaisir de la comédie italienne, l'autre celui de la

vue des Tuileries où se rend tout ce que l'Europe a de personnes les plus distinguées et des mieux faites dans les deux sexes. La dernière fenêtre n'étoit pas la moins agréable: elle lui fournissoit un moyen sûr pour apprendre tout ce qui se faisoit dans le monde. La scène étoit amusante et diversifiée de toutes sortes de façons. C'étoit quelquefois une fameuse ambassade qu'elle voyoit, un mariage illustre, ou quelques révolutions intéressantes. Elle étoit à cette fenêtre dans le tems de la dernière révolte des janissaires, elle en fut témoin jusqu'à la fin. (C.F., XXVI, 88)

No mention of filial piety here, no real hardship, and only faintly simulated solitude. This is far too soft a life to constitute any kind of test, and certainly not enough solitude for Belle to come to any important self-realisation.

When we come to the moment of the final test--that of Belle's visit home, we find that, whereas Mme Le Prince de Beaumont manages the whole episode, from her departure from the castle to the happy union with the prince, in five tiny pages of the 1811 edition, Mme de Villeneuve requires 47 normal-sized pages for the same events. Now there is nothing intrinsically wrong with length in itself; on the contrary, it gives a good indication that the writer is doing something with the basic tale which changes its essential nature and puts it into a more self-conscious category. In addition, no less a folklorist than Max Lüthi mentions the historic interest of the changes and additions various authors give to basic stories:

The individual compilers cast the fairy tale in the garb of their time, and the tension between the inner form and the outer garb of the fairy tale can be particularly charming for those with fastidious tastes.⁵

One must try to decide when the tale is altered beyond recognition, and at what point it ceases to be part of the general fund of traditional tales. In the case we are discussing, the filling out of

the simple details of the straightforward narrative by Mme de Ville-neuve has the unfortunate effect of dulling the force of the story--although it gives us an acute awareness of the historical adaptation of the tale--because when the climax comes--or should come--it is obscured by the concessions which are made to contemporary sensibilities, so that we become impatient with the whole business, which we certainly never do with the very succinct form of the actual folk tale itself.

Mme Le Prince de Beaumont observes very carefully this conciseness, and each detail of the final test to which Belle is put is perfectly clearly defined, and comes to a satisfactory resolution. She may go and see her family, but must return at the end of a week. We see immediately and clearly the conflict between her and her sisters, and jealousy is recognizably the motive for their hostility:

Elles étoient toutes deux fort malheureuses; l'aînée avoit épousé un gentilhomme beau comme l'Amour; mais il étoit si amoureux de sa propre figure, qu'il n'étoit occupé que de cela depuis le matin jusqu'au soir, et méprisoit la beauté de sa femme. La seconde avoit épousé un homme qui avoit beaucoup d'esprit; mais il ne s'en servoit que pour faire enrager tout le monde, et sa femme toute la première. (C.F., XXVI, 78)

We realize, therefore, that it is not the case that Belle is proven lacking in resolve when the time of her stay expires, and she does not return to the castle; it is rather the pressure exerted on her good nature by her sisters who tear out their hair and affect great affliction each time she mentions departure. On the tenth night, however, she has a dream in which she sees the Beast dying of disappointment because she has not returned; she immediately puts on the table the ring which is the sign that she wants to return to the

castle. She passes the day anxiously awaiting his usual appearance after supper. When he fails to appear, she goes in search of him and finds him exactly as he was in the dream. She resuscitates him, whereupon he reproaches her and says he is about to die of grief.

She replies:

Non, ma chère Bête, vous vivez pour devenir mon époux, dès ce moment je vous donne ma main, et je jure que je ne serai qu'à vous. Hélas! je croyois n'avoir que de l'amitié pour vous, mais la douleur que je sens me fait voir que je ne pourrois vivre sans vous voir. (C.F., XXVI, 81)

Immediately, the castle is illuminated, fireworks go off, music plays, and Belle, turning her eyes from the spectacle, finds "un prince plus beau que l'Amour" in place of the Beast. Despite her delight, she cannot refrain from asking after him:

Vous la voyez à vos pieds, lui dit le prince; une méchante fée m'avoit condamné à rester sous cette figure jusqu'à ce qu'une belle fille consentît à m'épouser, et elle m'avoit défendu de faire paraître mon esprit. Ainsi il n'y avoit que vous dans le monde assez bonne pour vous laisser toucher à la bonté de mon caractère, et en vous offrant ma couronne, je ne puis m'acquitter des obligations que je vous ai. (M.E., I, 65)

Virtue, therefore, is rewarded in a straightforward way which is universally satisfying, and at the same time, an important transformation scene is brought about in such a way as to accord with the principles of J.R.R. Tolkien:

It is the mark of a good fairy story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the "turn" comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and a lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality.⁶

Not only that, but the unpleasant sisters are punished in a way which

is as satisfying as the nature of Belle's reward. They are to be turned into statues, but are to keep their intelligence beneath the stone façade, so that they are condemned to watch Belle's happiness.

The fairy declares:

Vous ne pourrez revenir dans votre premier état, qu'au moment où vous reconnoîtrez vos fautes: mais j'ai bien peur que vous ne restiez toujours statues. On se corrige de l'orgueil, de la colère, de la gourmandise et de la paresse; mais c'est une espèce de miracle que la conversion d'un coeur méchant et envieux. (M.E., I, 82)

In Mme de Villeneuve's version, we know in advance that the dénouement is going to be more protracted than this because Belle's furlough from the castle has a duration of two months. Belle's dream on the night she is to leave for home is not only confusing to the reader, but also seems to be something of a red herring, as it is not at all clear what its import is. The handsome stranger of whom she has dreamed every night tries to persuade her not to come back. In the dream she declares that she has given her word to the Beast, and her non-return would mean his death:

Sachez que je donneroie ma vie pour conserver la sienne, et que ce monstre, qui ne l'est que par la figure, a l'humeur si humaine, qu'il ne doit pas être puni d'une difformité à laquelle il ne contribue point: je ne puis payer ses bontés d'une si noire ingratitude. (C.F., XXVI, 97)

Belle is obviously being pushed to the test of admitting her attachment to the Beast, but it is hard to imagine why it is the handsome young man, who is really another manifestation of the Beast itself, who is trying to dissuade her from returning, as it is his own destruction which will be the result if he succeeds in this enterprise.

Be that as it may, Belle returns to her father's house, and the familial situation imposes itself on the development of the story,

so that the castle and the Beast become as remote from the reader as they are physically from the merchant's house. One link between the two, however, is Belle's father's exhortation to her to marry the Beast. He delivers a fairly long homily on the folly of trusting to appearances, and ends thus:

Combien de filles à qui l'on fait épouser des bêtes riches, mais plus bête que la Bête, qui ne l'est que par la figure et non par les sentimens et par les actions?

(C.F., XXVI, 103)

Here we have left the world of the fairy tale and have re-entered the world of reality and domesticity. The father thinks in the most prosaic terms imaginable of daughters to be married, and, stripping Belle's dream of its enormously romantic element, turns it into a piece of practical counsel:

Il est plus avantageux d'avoir un mari d'un caractère aimable, que d'en avoir un qui n'ait que la bonne mine pour tout mérite. (C.F., XXVI, 103)

He knows whereof he speaks, as the behaviour of the fiancés of all his other daughters must obviously be a source of family embarrassment. They recognize Belle's superiority in all respects to her sisters and vie with each other for her favours. Although she rejects their advances very firmly, this does not exonerate her in the eyes of her sisters: "Pour comble de tristesse, ses injustes soeurs qui la regardoient comme une rivale, congurent contre elle une aversion qu'elles ne purent dissimuler" (C.F., XXVI, 109).

In this version, as in the other, it is the dream of the dying Beast which brings about her decision to leave home, but after the decision is made, the return to the castle is deferred by interminable

farewells, which reveal a distinct sense of procrastination on her part, which is totally unfitting for that moment, and which is expressed thus: "Combattue par des sentimens de tendresse et de reconnaissance, elle ne pouvoit pencher vers l'une qu'elle ne fît injustice à l'autre" (C.F., XXVI, 110).

It is at the moment of the actual transformation that we realize the shortcomings of expanding the folk tale into something else. The result here is that we are never quite clear when, or even that, the happy ending has really occurred. Belle's search for the Beast is too prolonged to begin with, and when she does finally find him, in exactly the situation she has seen him in the dream, there is much coming and going of the monkey-lackeys to get water to revive him. When he is finally revived by Belle's words of tenderness, he tells her to return to the castle to rest (though psychologically, rest is the most counter-intuitive thing to introduce at what should be a moment of great tension). The purpose of this is so that she can dream for the last time about the handsome young stranger; this time, however, the dream brings her nothing but disappointment, as the stranger urges her to marry the Beast in order to bring about his own happiness--a thought which, not surprisingly, puzzles her considerably.

Another day goes by before the Beast joins her as she dines alone, and asks the customary question. When she answers in the affirmative, fireworks crackle and canon boom, but the Beast remains unchanged and says it is time for bed. At this point, Mme de Villeneuve is at pains to make it quite clear that nothing improper

takes place; the Beast begins to snore at once, and it is not until she wakes up the following morning that Belle realizes that it is the handsome stranger who is lying in bed beside her. Again, however, the rules of bienséance are adhered to, but this time, there is sufficient titillation to give a hint of prurience to the story:

Comme [Belle] étoit seule, elle ne craignoit de scandaliser personne par les libertés qu'elle pouvoit prendre avec lui; de plus il étoit son époux. C'est pourquoi donnant un libre cours à ses tendres sentimens elle le baisa mille fois. (C.F., XXVI, 124)

(Incidentally, these are almost the same words which were used but a few pages earlier during a dream sequence:

Elle n'étoit point retenue par la fière bienséance, et le sommeil lui laissant la liberté d'agir naturellement, elle lui découvroit des sentimens qu'elle auroit contrainsts, en faisant un usage parfait de sa raison.
(C.F., XXVI, 98)

It is an interesting reflection upon public prudery that responsibility is lifted from Belle on each occasion; nice girls are obviously not meant to act in a sensual way when they are in full possession of their faculties or when other people are around.)

Even now, however, Tolkien's "turn" does not come, for the handsome young man does not wake up in response to Belle's cajoling but is roused only by the sound of a chariot which descends from the heavens. Out of this steps a lady whom Belle has seen in her dreams and a queen, who turns out to be the mother of the sleeper. It looks for a moment as if all will be well, and that Belle will indeed marry the prince. Unfortunately, the queen has a consciousness of social forms which Mme de Villeneuve's readers must have understood very well. She expresses her gratitude thus:

Charmante et vertueuse fille, à qui j'ai tant d'obligations, apprenez-moi qui vous êtes, le nom des souverains assez heureux pour avoir donné le jour à une princesse si parfaite. (C.F., XXVI, 127)

Alas, the truth must out, and the queen is enraged to discover that the fairy actually means to marry her royal son to the daughter of a merchant! There follows a battle of wills during which Belle nobly declares that she cannot possibly marry the young man, now that she knows such a thing to be against his mother's wishes; the prince declares that he will marry her at all cost, and the queen declares he shall not. The fairy finally puts an end to this impasse by explaining that Belle is, in fact the niece of the queen herself, but that her birth was kept secret for reasons which are too complicated and irrelevant to go into here, so finally, after many pages, the marriage can take place to everyone's satisfaction.

It is therefore the more elaborate, more worldly version of this tale which finds its way into Le Cabinet des fées as better representing the state of the genre at this time. The very strong elements of rationalization which we notice in Mme de Villeneuve's version make us realize that the plots have moved a long way from the relatively unadorned facts of a Perrault tale, and are advancing towards the predecessors of science fiction, which by definition require a fantastic plot to be explained and brought into the physical world which is governed by measurable phenomena with which we are all familiar.

CONCLUSION

Although the stories we have been looking at span the best part of a century, there is little about them that constitutes a progression or a development; rather they represent expressions of different fashions in literature; Gueullette wishes to transport his readers to the Orient in pursuit of their exotic dreams; Mlle de Lussan and Mme Le Prince de Beaumont want to uplift by sound moral example; Rousseau makes a point about the folly of human desires, and so on. Yet for all this disparity, there are several unifying factors in the collection, and it is these factors that we should look at now as we try to put the stories in a literary perspective.

The most obvious point in common is that any kind of realism in the setting of these stories is purely accidental. They are all set in fantastic settings--either the abode of fairies or some foreign land about which both author and reader have only a very hazy idea, or a remote historical moment. In this we can see a deliberate eschewing of the trend towards realism which is the most salient feature of most of the rest of the literature of the century. Nor is psychological realism of the kind presented by Marivaux in, for example, Le Paysan parvenu or by Diderot in Jacques le fataliste given any thought in the fairy stories. That kind of phenomenon in which the sensibilities of the individual are treated with intense interest and his thoughts and motivations dilated upon is

quite outside the sphere of these stories: what fairy stories are about is some kind of generalisation of the human condition, and the recounting of only the most widely held and easily recognisable aspirations and experiences. The judicious weighing up of the advantages of marrying the steady A as against the less reliable but more romantic B have no place here; all that matters is that there should be an ultimate state of happiness-ever-after, which is reached through following a thoroughly well-beaten track on which the obstacles can be as fantastic as the author pleases.

The second uniform aspect of the stories is an absolute adherence to a form which will satisfy the reader's expectations. For both readers and authors, these stories represented a pleasurable activity which are either meant to amuse a group of friends gathered together in a relaxed atmosphere or to please the recipient with fond thoughts of the donor if they were sent as gifts to friends. Many of the writers, as we have seen, were principally engaged in more serious matters. The idea of fulfilling expectations is therefore an important one since it means that the stories can be read without any of the psychological tension which accompanies the reading of a story whose outcome cannot be guessed at. Everyone knows that there is going to be a happy ending, which is exactly what they want. In addition, such tension as there is attached to reading them is to be short-lived and easy to tolerate because the stories are all short enough to be read at one sitting.

The stories also embody two characteristics of the eighteenth century, which might at first appear to be mutually incompatible, but which we know existed side by side throughout the century both inside and outside of

literature. The two trends are, on the one hand, a sense of moral example which is to be applied to real life, and on the other an attempt to escape completely from real life. An example from our stories shows that both of these can be deduced from the same source: if we look back for a moment at Gueullette's preoccupation with the Orient, we can think of it as fulfilling both functions: we can think of it as opening up to us a foreign world which can show us things which can usefully supplement our own experience with a moral lesson cast in a novel guise, or we can think of it as transporting us away from our own reality so that we can escape into a dream world where we need not be troubled by the mundane considerations of everyday life.

Let us look first at the aspect of moral example which we have come across again and again. What must be made clear, first of all, is that the expression "moral example" covers a wider area than the rather narrow didacticism of certain stories--"Les Veillées de Thessalie," for example. What is in question here is a more general concept which was present in French literature at least from La Fontaine and well into the nineteenth century.¹ It is the desire to provide the reader with material which can be put to his use, either in an external way with regard to his conduct with other people, or, more particularly, in an internal way in order to reinforce or even form his moral attitudes. In general, this does not necessarily imply moralizing, but we have seen, time and again, that all our stories turn out all right for the person with whom we identify, either because of acquired virtue or because of inherent goodness of nature.

All this is in marked contrast with the other kinds of short story with which our stories can be compared, namely the conte licencieux and

the conte philosophique. In the former, it is the role of virtue which is at variance with what we have been reading. In fact, it makes little sense to speak of virtue at all in the context of the conte licencieux, for it is its total absence which gives these stories the carefree amorality which is their charm. Had the editors of Le Cabinet des fées been more receptive to this charm, they might have included an example of the writing of the abbé de Voisenon--Le Sultan Misapouf et la princesse Grisemine, for example, which, with its oriental setting and atmosphere of magic, could certainly be thought to have some attributes in common with the other stories. It is obvious, however, that the presentation of a moral point of view is an important aim of the collection. Most of the literary licentiousness of the time was, unexceptionally, kept underground and censured in public. Many of the wilder kinds of story must have been perpetrated around the table of Mlle Quinault when it was littered with empty champagne bottles. When Mme d'Epinay was trying to make up her mind about the actress, she expresses reservations about her thus: "au milieu d'un certain maintien apprêté et pedant, il lui échappe des plaisanteries un peu fortes."² Our editor was not anxious to lay bare such plaisanteries for posterity.

That the conte philosophique is absent from this collection is similarly explicable. The one example we have of the form--namely La Reine Fantasque--has in common with the other stories the interested intervention of supernatural forces, and in contrast to them shows the capriciousness of human behaviour rather than of supra-human behaviour. In the conte philosophique good or bad things befall the characters because they are treated by destiny in a completely arbitrary way, destiny

being a completely detached force. In Le Cabinet des fées, however, the bad occurs because some malign agency desires an unfavourable outcome, and happy resolution is brought about by the intervention of an equally interested but benign force. The result of this, naturally, is an escapist kind of doctrine very much at variance with the cynicism of the conte philosophique. For some authors this was solely an amusing retreat into fantasy; for others like Mme Le Prince de Beaumont it had a more utilitarian aspect in that they imbued it with an allegorical force.

If this escapism from various kinds of reality is uncharacteristic of the general trends of the literature of the eighteenth century, it is absolutely in tune with some of the other artistic expression of the time and also with certain extreme, but by no means insignificant manifestations of real life. Examples of escapism at the court of France were not wanting, from the beginning of the century to its tumultuous end. The early years of the century saw the Sun King trying to escape from the shambles of his long reign in the seclusion of Marly; the end witnessed Marie-Antoinette shielding herself against the reality of the revolution with her shepherdess's crook, and in the middle, Mme de Pompadour, having failed to interest her royal lover in philosophy and government, made the centre of courtly interest her theatricals, porcelains and masquerades, all of which provided a barrier against reality.

In the arts, the most obvious parallel with the escapist inclination is in the field of painting. Watteau, who was painting at the beginning of the century, is justly famous for his paintings of theatrical scenes, the best known of these being Gilles, who gazes from the fellow actors of

the world of the stage into a far-off dream world of his own. He is also the first painter to depict the fête galante on canvas. His Fête Vénitienne has the quality of make-believe exoticism common to most of our stories. The male figure who dominates the painting is dressed in more or less oriental garb and he and the lady he is saluting strike a stylized pose. There is modest titillation in the mild flirtation which is obviously going on in the background, and in the fluid lines of the statue of a naked woman who overlooks the whole group, and who seems to be more flesh than marble. The Pilgrimage to Cythera is even more akin to the spirit of the fairy tales, as its theme is the fantastic voyage so pervasive in the tales. As in the stories, the purpose of the voyage is the happy union of lovers, and their contented poses and the regretful glances they direct back to the island as they turn back to the ship indicate that the voyage has achieved its purpose. The exquisite, muted colours of the painting, the mistiness of the haze and the loop of flying cherubs all contribute to the fantastic, dream-like atmosphere. A similar quality can be observed in the paintings of Fragonard, who was at the height of his powers when the Revolution broke out. Despite the fact that he won the approval of Diderot for the realism of his portrayal of family scenes and for his portraits, he, too, is happy to paint lovers in an idyllic setting. The Swing of 1786, for example, embodies the muted naughtiness we have observed in Caylus and Duclos: the girl on the swing loses her shoe as she wantonly kicks her leg in the air--all to delight the young man who is reclining beneath the swing. The wood behind the couple has an idealized, fairy-tale quality, and the painting could well be an illustration of any one of the tales which has a sylvan setting,

and an idealized folk theme. If it is possible to transpose terms from one of the arts to another, then one may say that the same spirit pervades a lot of the music of the period. The suites of Boismortier and Corette have a similar pastoral quality to the paintings--they very often use folk tunes for a theme--and a similar form to the stories: they consist of brief pieces easily absorbed in one performance and which always have a happy resolution.

At this point one should normally be able to discuss the development of the genre one is discussing in terms of subsequent writers. In this case, however, there is nothing to say on that score, as the fantastic short story becomes a completely different vehicle by the end of the century, and people who were writing in that mode certainly did not take their cue from the writers we have discussed. The fantasy of our short stories consists of imaginary voyages to exotic or idyllic places, and the supernatural forces have the form of fairies or genies or monstrous beasts. With the burgeoning interest in the individual which was to lead to full-fledged Romanticism, the fantastic voyage into the Orient or into the fairy kingdom was to give way to fantastic voyages into the mind of the individual. The main impetus for this trend came from E.T.A. Hoffman in Germany, whose main interest is in the tortured minds of his characters. In France, Cazotte and Nodier similarly use the technique of conflating a real character in a recognizable setting with the fantasies of his imagination, which are given an independent existence of their own. That the metaphysical manifestations of this kind of story are a far cry from the concrete fantasies of Le Cabinet des fées is a point which does not need to be laboured; we find increasingly

that the fairy tale is relegated to the nursery, and is no longer considered an adult kind of entertainment. We know from the derogatory remarks about our fanciful tales that there was already a strong element of ridicule attached to them even as they were being written, and we find Voltaire, in one of his own contes, making a pointed reference to them; in the words of "la belle Amaside, qui avait de l'esprit et du gout":

Je veux qu'un conte soit fondé sur la vraisemblance, et qu'il ne ressemble pas toujours à un rêve. Je désire qu'il n'ait rien de trivial ni d'extravagant. Je voudrais surtout que, sous le voile de la fable, il laissât entrevoir aux yeux exercés quelque vérité fine qui échappe au vulgaire.³

Such requirements are not to be found in Le Cabinet des fées; the stories that we have been looking at are the literary arabesques and curlicues of the century of the rococco, and we must be content with them as the charming decoration which can beguile us for a while and divert us from the more serious ends which Voltaire has in mind.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- ¹Mary Elizabeth Storer, La Mode des contes de fées (1685-1700) (Paris: Champion, 1928).
- ²Roger Caillois, Anthologie du fantastique (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 8.
- ³Le Cabinet des fées (Amsterdam, 1785-1789), 41 vols. In all subsequent quotations, this work will be referred to as C.F.; the Roman numeral following will refer to the volume number, and the Arabic numeral is the page number.
- ⁴Georges May, Le Dilemme du roman au XVIII^e siècle (Paris: P.U.F., 1963), p. 4.
- ⁵Lionel Gossman, "Literature and Society," French Society and Culture (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972).
- ⁶Jacques Barchilon, "Précieux Elements in the Fairy Tale of the Seventeenth Century," L'Esprit Créateur, III, 3 (Fall 1963). This entire issue is devoted to the conte in the seventeenth century.
- ⁷Emanuel Cosquin, Etudes folkloriques (Paris: Champion, 1922), p. 3.
- ⁸C.F., XIX, 371.
- ⁹Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic (Cleveland/London: Case Western Reserve Press, 1973), p. 6.
- ¹⁰All subsequent quotations in this chapter are taken from this "Discours préliminaire."
- ¹¹L'Abbé de Voisenon, Le Sultan Misapouf et la Princesse Grisemine (Montréal: Quinnal Associates, 1969), p. 9.

CHAPTER I

¹Gueullette himself expresses satisfaction with the reception of his stories. In the "Avis au lecteur" printed at the head of "Les Sultanes de Guzarate" in volume XXII of Le Cabinet des fées, he says:

J'ai ... éprouvé la bonté du public plus d'une fois, dans les livres que je lui ai donnés dans ce genre....

Il a lu avec beaucoup de plaisir, à ce que j'ai appris ce conte habillé à la tartare, et extrêmement différent de ce qu'il est dans l'original. J'espère qu'il sera de même aujourd'hui. (C.F., XXII, 210)

The Reverend Thomas Stackhouse published his translation, Chinese Tales or the Wonderful Adventures of the Mandarin Fum Hoam in London in 1740.

²Quoted in Thomas-Simon Gueullette by J.-E. Gueullette (Paris: Droz, 1938), p. 63.

³Many of the stories we will be discussing have the format of the story-within-the-story which is exemplified in Les Mille et une nuits. The frame story in that case is that of Scheherezade and the Sultan, although the bulk of the large book consists of the stories Scheherezade tells. Similarly in many of our works there is one plot which serves to introduce a collection of stories and which is taken up again only after many tales often unrelated to it have been recounted.

CHAPTER II

¹These take up volumes VII, VIII and part of IX in Le Cabinet des fées.

²Sir Richard F. Burton, A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entitled the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night with Introductory Explanatory Notes on the Manners and Customs of Moslem Men and a Terminal Essay upon the History of the Nights (Printed by the Kama-Shastra Society for Private Subscribers Only, 1885, 10 vols.), vol. 10, p. 111.

¹Nikita Elisséeff, Thèmes et motifs des Mille et une nuits (Beirut: Institut Français de Damas, 1949), pp. 9-10.

²P. Martino, L'Orient dans la littérature française au XVII^e et au XVIII^e siècle (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970). (Réimpression de l'édition de Paris, 1906.)

³Paris: P.U.F., 1963.

⁴Storer, La Mode des contes de fées (1685-1700), p. v.

⁵George Willis Cooke, A Guide-Book to the Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1891), p. 294.

CHAPTER IV

¹Contes d'Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif de l'Académie Française, avec une notice bio-bibliographique par Octave Uzanne (Paris: A. Quantin, 1879), p. xxx.

²Storer, La Mode des contes de fées (1685-1700), p. iv.

³Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, The Adventures of Zeloide and Amanzarifdine translated and edited by C.K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1971), "Introduction," p. 145. First published in London in 1920.

⁴Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, Essai sur la nécessité et sur les moyens de plaire (Amsterdam: Changuion, 1738), p. 145.

⁵Moncrif, The Adventures of Zeloide and Amanzarifdine, p. xxiv.

⁶Quoted in Uzanne, Contes d'Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, p. xxxv.

⁷Quoted in Uzanne, Contes d'Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, pp. xxi-xxii.

⁸Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, Essais sur la nécessité et sur les moyens de plaire (Paris: Prault, 1737), p. 188.

CHAPTER V

- ¹Le Mercure de France (juin 1733), pp. 1390-1391.
- ²Marguerite de Lussan, Histoire de la Comtesse de Gondez (La Haye: Cramer et Philibert, 1749). First published in 1725.
- ³de Lussan, Histoire de la Comtesse de Gondez, p. 22.
- ⁴de Lussan, Histoire de la Comtesse de Gondez, p. 32.

CHAPTER VI

- ¹Ruth E. Clark, The Life of Anthony Hamilton (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1921).
- ²Antoine Hamilton, Mémoires du Chevalier de Grammont, précédés d'une notice sur la vie et les ouvrages d'Hamilton par M. Auger (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1861), p. i.
- ³Antoine Hamilton, Oeuvres diverses (Paris: A.A. Renouard, 1813), p. 146.
- ⁴Hamilton, Oeuvres diverses, p. 58.
- ⁵Hamilton, Oeuvres diverses, p. 59.
- ⁶Hamilton, Oeuvres diverses, p. 114.
- ⁷Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, avec la suite des Facardins et de Zeneyde par M. de Levis (Paris: A.A. Renouard, 1813), vol. II, p. 148.
- ⁸Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. II, p. 149.
- ⁹Mémoires du Chevalier de Grammont, pp. 27-28.
- ¹⁰Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. I, p. 189.
- ¹¹Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. II, p. 189.

¹²Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. II, p. 155.

¹³Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. II, p. 158.

¹⁴Contes d'Antoine Hamilton, vol. II, p. 202.

¹⁵Emile Montégut, "Des Fées et de leur littérature en France," Revue des Deux Mondes, XXXVIII (avril 1862), p. 671n.

¹⁶André-M. Rousseau, "A la découverte d'Antoine Hamilton, conteur," Etudes Littéraires, I, 2 (1968), pp. 185-195.

¹⁷Voltaire, Le Temple du goût, ed. E. Carcassonne (Paris: Droz, 1938), p. 135.

¹⁸André-M. Rousseau, "A la découverte d'Antoine Hamilton, conteur," Etudes Littéraires, I, 2 (1968), p. 187.

CHAPTER VII

¹Samuel Rocheblave, Essai sur le Comte de Caylus (Paris, 1889), p. 74.

²Saint-Simon, Mémoires, texte établi et annoté par Gonzague Truc (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), vol. IV, pp. 708-709. (Collection La Pléiade.)

³Gilbert Tyle, "Jane Austen and the Moralists," Oxford Review, 1 (1966).

CHAPTER VIII

¹Quoted by Bette Gross Silverblatt in her book: The Maxims in the Novels of Duclos (The Hague: Martinus Hijhoff, 1972), p. 17.

²Charles Duclos, Madame de Luz, notes et commentaires de Jacques Brengues (Saint-Brieuc: Presses Universitaires de Bretagne, 1972), p. 17.

³Montesquieu, Lettres persanes (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 103.

CHAPTER IX

¹V.D. Musset-Pathay, Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Dupont, 1827), p. 223.

²J.-J. Rousseau, Correspondance générale, publiée par Th. Dufour et P.-P. Plan (1924-1934), II, p. 273.

³J.-J. Rousseau, Correspondance générale, IV, p. 163.

⁴Musset-Pathay, Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, p. 219.

⁵Musset-Pathay, Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, pp. 220-221. A few pages later in this same account there is a rather long and detailed pictorial evocation of this scene (see Appendix). There is a striking similarity in the simplicity of the background, and the rusticity introduced, mainly through the mention of Thérèse, between this scene and the famous engraving at the beginning of the original edition of Perrault's Contes de ma mère l'oye.

⁶C.F., XXVI, 5: "Je dis six mois, non de suite; c'eut été autant de repos pour son mari; mais dans les intervalles propres à le chagriner."

⁷J.-J. Rousseau, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), vol. II, p. 1910.

⁸Inge Margarethe Boberg, Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1966).

CHAPTER X

¹Mme Le Prince de Beaumont, Le Magasin des enfants (La Flèche: Voglet, 1811), pp. i, ii, iii; hereinafter referred to as M.D.E.

²Voltaire, Romans et contes (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 125.

³Mme de Villeneuve, La Jeune Americaine et les contes marins (La Haye, 1740), pp. 46-47.

⁴Jacques Barchilon, Le Conte fantastique en France de 1690 à 1790 (Genève: Slatkine, 1975), pp. 8-9.

⁵Max Lüthi, *Once Upon a Time* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1970), p. 34. Translated from the original Es War Einmal (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht).

⁶R.R. Tolkien, Tree and Leaf (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 23. First published 1964.

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- . "Uses of the Fairy Tale in the Eighteenth Century," SVEC, 25 (1963), 111-138.
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APPENDIX I

Que l'imagination se transporte à cette scène familière, à ce tableau de l'éloquent auteur d'Emile, du peintre brûlant de Julie, oubliant ses ennemis et sa gloire, pour n'offrir que la touchante simplicité du génie et son aimable abandon; qu'on se le représente animé de la plus franche gaîté, et cherchant, par son joyeux récit, à la communiquer à ses amis, qui le contemplent et l'écoutent dans une espèce d'extase. Qu'on y joigne, si l'on veut, mais dans le fond du tableau, Thérèse Le Vasseur, partagée entre les soins du ménage et l'attention qu'elle prête à la seule des productions de Rousseau qu'elle ait été peut-être en état de comprendre; qu'on se peigne la physionomie de Rousseau, alors âgé de cinquante ans, et son costume à l'arménienne, tel qu'il l'avait adopté à cette époque; et, pour porter la vérité jusque dans un des petits détails de ses habitudes, que son chat favori ne soit pas oublié, reposant sur ses genoux.... je ne sais si je me trompe, mais il me semble que, d'après ces renseignements et ces souvenirs, J.-J. Rousseau, à Motiers-Travers, récitant sa Reine fantasque à trois de ses amis de Genève, pourrait offrir un sujet assez intéressant pour exercer le pinceau de quelque habile peintre, qui trouverait ici un grand nom et une scène originale.

APPENDIX II

Vers le quarante-huitieme degré de latitude septentrionale, on a découvert nouvellement une Nation de Sauvages, plus féroce & plus redoutable que les Caraïbes ne l'ont jamais été. On les appelle Cacouacs (1): ils ne portent ni fleches, ni massues: leurs cheveux sont rangés avec art; leurs vêtemens brillans d'or, d'argent & de mille couleurs, les rendent semblables aux fleurs les plus éclatantes, ou aux oiseaux les plus richement panachés: ils semblent n'avoir d'autre soin que de se parer, de se parfumer & de plaire: en les voyant, on sent un penchant secret qui vous attire vers eux: les grâces dont ils vous comblent, sont le dernier piège qu'ils emploient.

Toutes leurs armes consistent dans un venin caché sous leur langue; à chaque parole qu'ils prononcent, même du ton le plus doux & le plus riant, ce venin coule, s'échappe & se répand au loin. Par le secours de la magie qu'ils cultivent soigneusement, ils ont l'art de le lancer à quelque distance que ce soit. Comme ils ne sont pas moins lâches que méchans, ils n'attaquent en face que ceux dont ils croient n'avoir rien à craindre: le plus souvent ils lancent leur poison par derrière.

(1) Il est à remarquer que le mot Grec ~~κακός~~^{κακός}, qui ressemble à celui de Cacouacs, signifie méchant.

Parmi les malheureux qui en sont atteints, il y en a qui périssent subitement: d'autres conservent la vie; mais leurs plaies sont incurables, & ne se referment jamais; tout l'art de la médecine ne peut rien contr'elles: d'ailleurs on les prend souvent pour être naturelles; ceux qui en sont frappés deviennent des objets d'horreur, de mépris, & le plus souvent d'une dérision qui n'est pas moins cruelle: tout le monde les fuit; leurs meilleurs amis rougissent de les connaître & de prendre leur défense.

Les Cacouacs ne respectent aucune liaison de société, de parenté, d'amitié, ni même d'amour: ils traitent tous les hommes avec la même perfidie; on remarque seulement en eux un plaisir un peu plus vif à répandre leur poison sur ceux dont ils ont éprouvé l'amitié ou les bienfaits: en ce cas, ils ont pourtant soin de l'assaisonner du suc de quelques fleurs; car, malgré leur cruauté, ils ne perdent jamais de vue l'envie de plaire, d'amuser & de séduire.

Ils paroissent d'abord les plus sociables de tous les hommes; ils les recherchent & veulent en être recherchés: mais tout ce qu'ils en font, n'est que dans le dessein d'exercer leur méchanceté, qui ne peut avoir aucune prise sur ceux qui ont le bonheur de n'être pas connus d'eux. Plus vous les voyez affecter de graces, de gaieté, de vivacité, plus vous devez vous en défier; c'est ordinairement-là l'instant qu'ils choisissent pour darder leur venin: vous vous livrez à l'enjouement qu'ils vous inspirent, & vous êtes tout étonnés de l'abondance du poison qui s'est insinué dans vos oreilles, & qui vous a porté à la tête les idées les plus sinistres & les plus cruelles. Malheur à ceux qui se plaisent à les voir & à les entendre! Quelques précautions

qu'ils prennent, quelques protestations que les Cacouacs leur fassent de les épargner, ils n'ont pas plutôt le dos tourné qu'ils éprouvent leur rage.

Cependant ces Barbares, tout barbares qu'ils sont, se craignent mutuellement, & ne s'attaquent guere entr'eux: mais quand ils rencontrent quelqu'un qui n'est pas initié dans les mystères de leur magie, ils le poursuivent impitoyablement: du reste, parce qu'ils détestent toute vertu, ils n'en admettent aucune sur la terre, affectent de croire tous les hommes pervers; il suffit d'être modeste, honnête, bienfaisant pour être en butte à leurs traits.

On exhorte ceux qui voyageront vers cette contrée, à se munir de bonnes armes offensives. On a observé que ces Sauvages les craignent beaucoup: à leur simple vue, ils cessent de rire & de faire rire; ce qui est un signe assuré qu'ils sont forcés de retenir leur venin: il reflue alors sur eux, même avec tant de violence, qu'ils périroient bientôt, s'ils ne s'échappoient promptement pour aller chercher des objets sur lesquels ils puissent le dégorger: c'est-là leur unique occupation. On les voit courir çà & là, & roder sans cesse dans cette vue.

Les hommes les plus barbares que l'on ait découverts jusqu'ici, ne sont point sans quelques qualités morales; les insectes les plus déplaisans, les reptiles les plus venimeux, ont quelques propriétés utiles. Il n'en est pas de même des Cacouacs: toute leur substance n'est que venin & corruption; la source en est intarissable & coule toujours. Ce sont peut-être les seuls êtres dans la nature qui fassent le mal précisément pour le plaisir de faire du mal.

On a des avis sûrs que quelques-uns de ces monstres sont venus en Europe; ils se sont appliqués à contrefaire le ton de la bonne compagnie, pour s'y introduire & s'y mieux cacher: on les rencontre dans les cercles les plus agréables. Ils recherchent particulièrement la société des femmes, qu'ils affectent d'aimer; mais c'est contre'elles qu'ils exhalent leur venin de préférence. Il seroit difficile de fixer des indices certains pour les reconnoître: on conseille seulement de se défier des gens qui plaisantent sur tout; on découvre tôt ou tard que ce sont des Cacouacs.

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